

Dotawo ►
A Journal of Nubian Studies

2019 #6

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Edited by
Adam Simmons



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The pyramids at Meroe. Photo by Vincent W.J. van Gerven Oei.

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1. A medieval Nubian kingdom controlling the central Nile Valley, best known from Old Nubian documents excavated at Qasr Ibrim and other sites in Lower Nubia.
2. An open-access journal of Nubian studies, providing a cross-disciplinary platform for historians, linguists, anthropologists, archaeologists, and other scholars interested in all periods and aspects of Nubian civilization.

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1. Ammiki Nuba-n sirki Tungula-n Bahar aal poccika anda kan-nim, ne poccika an ammikin Nuba-n kitaaba an Kasr Ibrimiro poon isshi Nuba aro-n ammiki ir kar əəl koran əəllooyanero poccikare əəl oddnooyim.
2. Ele ne Nuba poccikan muǰallayane, aal poccika yaa əərngaanyatn, taariikiro, aallo, elekon poon ammik(i) ir ayin ir kanniyam pirro, poon ammik(i) aallo, elek(i) aallo poccikaa yaa əərngaanyatn.**

* Translation into Nobiin courtesy of Mohamed K. Khalil.

** Translation into Midob Nubian courtesy of Ishag A. Hassan.

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From the Editor

The papers in this edition build on the success of a series of sessions at the International Medieval Congress at the University of Leeds in 2016 on medieval Nubia. It is with great pleasure to be able to present paper versions of the talks presented by Effrosyni Zacharopoulou, Henriette Hafsaas, Olivia Adankpo-Labadie, and Jana Eger, Tim Karberg, and Angelika Lohwasser at the Congress, along with additional studies authored by myself, Asmaa Taha, Titus Kennedy, and Vincent van Gerven Oei.

The titling of this collection of papers as *Miscellanea Nubiana* is a fitting testament to the diversity of papers presented here and at the International Medieval Congress in Leeds. Nubian history and culture has always been, and continues to be, a showcase for the wealth of diversity of a people and region. The papers presented here attest to the cultural, linguistic, geographic, and demographic diversity witnessed throughout Nubian history nationally and internationally amongst its neighbours, both near and far, and thoroughly reflect the aims of the original sessions at Leeds.

I wish to thank all the participants in the medieval Nubia sessions at Leeds and Alexandros Tsakos, who co-organised the sessions. I would also like to especially thank Vincent van Gerven Oei on the production of this excellent collection.

An Ethiopian Fugitive Allied with a Nubian King? Ēwostātēwos and Sāb'a Nol at Nobā through Hagiographical Narrative

Olivia Adankpo-Labadie

Introduction

Around the year 1337, the Ethiopian monk Ēwostātēwos left his kingdom.¹ If his *vita* depicts his journey as a pilgrimage, one must admit that it was actually an exile. As a staunch advocate of the double Sabbath as well as an opponent of lay authorities, the monk held highly controversial views. At the beginning of the 14th century, he created a powerful, yet dissenting, movement in northern Ethiopia with his disciples, called the Eustatheans.² Nevertheless, this success led him into trouble. The newly appointed Metropolitan Yā'eqob, head of the Ethiopian Church, deprived him from all support. Moreover, king Amda Šeyon (1314–1344) banished the rebellious monk, and Warāsina 'Egzi, a local governor, cast him out.

Then, Ēwostātēwos and some of his fellows began a long journey, which led them from the Ethiopian highlands to Armenia, passing through Nubia, Egypt, Palestine, and Cyprus along the way. Thanks to Gianfranco Fiaccadori, who highlighted the circumstances of their travel to Cyprus and Armenia,³ we now understand much better the last stages of their tour. However, other parts of the itinerary are less known. The account of Ēwostātēwos's stay at Nobā is a

1 LUSINI, *Studi sul monachesimo eustaziano*, pp. 62–63. See also ADANKPO, *De la prédication hétérodoxe d'Ēwostātēwos à la formation d'un mouvement monastique puissant*, p. 45.

2 For an introduction to this movement and his founder, see LUSINI, *Studi sul monachesimo eustaziano*; DERAT, "Le développement à l'époque médiévale," pp. lvi–lxxxiv. For a historical analysis, see now ADANKPO, *De la prédication hétérodoxe d'Ēwostātēwos à la formation d'un mouvement monastique puissant*.

3 FIACCADORI, "Etiopia, Cipro e Armenia," pp. 73–78.

unique testimony to an Ethiopian vision of Medieval Nubia, abundantly referred to by historians.⁴ After leaving the land of Māryā, corresponding today to northwest Eritrea,⁵ the monk met the Christian king of Nobā called Sābʾa Nol who faced a violent uprising led by rebels. The king vividly urged the saint to give him victory through his intercession, in which Ēwoṣṭātēwos performed an outstanding miracle that led to the king's triumph. Despite its major interest and its problematic interpretation, an analysis of this interaction is still lacking. Numerous questions stand without answers concerning its fictional character. Who is Sabʾa Nol, king of Nobā? Did he ever exist? To what extent does this hagiographical reconstruction shed light on Medieval Nubia? This paper aims at providing a new translation based on the oldest manuscript of the *gadla Ēwoṣṭātēwos*, joined by an in-depth commentary dealing with the geographical, historical, and literary dimensions of the passage.

The *gadla Ēwoṣṭātēwos*, the spiritual biography of a fugitive monk

The *gadla Ēwoṣṭātēwos*, which means in Geʿez, *Contending of Ēwoṣṭātēwos*,⁶ relates the spiritual biography of Ēwoṣṭātēwos, from his miraculous birth in Tegrāy to his death, as an outcast monk persecuted for his faithfulness to the Law of God, in Armenia.⁷ This text belongs to the *gadl* literary genre, namely a narrative aiming at emphasizing the virtues of a holy man or woman chosen by God. Such biographies contain a stereotypical frame, with multiple similarities with Byzantine or Western hagiographies.⁸ The purpose of a *gadl* is clear: to promote the figure of a saint by evoking and remembering his or her uncommon fate. These narratives also have distinctive features because each has been elaborated in a specific context.

The *gadla Ēwoṣṭātēwos* unveils indeed a very complex manuscript tradition. Based on a comparison of all known manuscripts, Gianfrancesco Lusini has identified three different traditions of the text named α, β, and γ, which differ in their length, voluntary

4 For a quick overview, see MONNERET DE VILLARD, *Storia della Nubia cristiana*, pp. 220–221; SEIGNOBOS, “Nobā,” pp. 1193–1194; and recently ŁAJTAR & OCHALA, “An Unexpected Guest in the Church of Sonqī Tino,” pp. 264–265.

5 MIRAN, “Māryā,” pp. 824–826.

6 Geʿez belongs to the Ethio-Semitic group. It is the classical language of Ethiopia used both in literature and in the liturgy of Ethiopian Orthodox Church.

7 All that follows refers to the fundamental work of Gianfranco Lusini and my own recent research: LUSINI, *Studi sul monachesimo eustaziano*; ADANKPO, “Écriture et réécriture hagiographiques du *gadla Ēwoṣṭātēwos*”; and ADANKPO, *De la prédication hétérodoxe d'Ēwoṣṭātēwos à la formation d'un mouvement monastique puissant*.

8 See MARRASSINI, *Gadla Yohannes Mesraqawi*. For comparisons with Byzantine and Western hagiography: NOSNITSIN, “Hagiography,” pp. 969–972, and ADANKPO, “Écriture et réécriture hagiographiques du *gadla Ēwoṣṭātēwos*,” pp. 407–420.

omission or inclusion of some episodes, and their literary style.⁹ I have recently specified the circumstances of their making and their characteristics thanks to a wider investigation.¹⁰ The α version is the most ancient one and corresponds to the oldest manuscripts. In this *recensio vetusta*, the hagiographer underlines the dispute between the monk and lay authorities. Ēwoṣṭātēwos is portrayed as a virtuous and innocent monk facing royal brutality. On the contrary, the β version conveys a radically diverging image: in that version, he is described as a highly consensual saint, who performs numerous miracles and who has tight relations with king Amda Ṣeyon. The last tradition, called γ , is a condensed variant of the previous one, which indicates the success and the spread of the *Vita* in all Ethiopia.

The Eustathean monks of Dabra Māryām drafted the first version of the *gadla Ēwoṣṭātēwos* in the late 14th century at a time of persecution.¹¹ After the Dabra Meṭmāq council held in 1450, which reconciled the Eustathean dissent with royal power, the disciples of Ēwoṣṭātēwos have modified the contentious image of their patron. At that time, they were no longer the king's enemies but his powerful allies. Thus, the β variant must have been designed after the 15th century. Specialists of Ethiopian studies have used for a long time the sole edition and translation made by the Russian orientalist Boris Turaiev, which dates back to the early 20th century and is exclusively based on manuscripts belonging to the β tradition.¹² For example, Gérard Colin, who has recently delivered a new translation of the *gadl* in French, still uses Turaiev's edition.¹³

Nevertheless, the manuscripts belonging to the α family have the advantage of presenting a text that can be dated and whose drafting conditions are precisely known. Among the available manuscripts, the most ancient one is vat. aeth. 46. The volume, which dates from the mid 15th century, consists of the spiritual biography itself (fol. 2r-119r), the *Miracles* or *Ta' ammera Ēwoṣṭātēwos* (fol. 119r-127v) and various documents, that is to say notes, colophons, and hymns (fol. 128r-134r).¹⁴ The various texts of this manuscript can therefore be

9 LUSINI, *Studi sul monachesimo eustaziano*, pp. 35-67.

10 See the results in ADANKPO, "Écriture et réécriture hagiographiques du *gadla Ēwoṣṭātēwos*" and ADANKPO, *De la prédication hétérodoxe d'Ēwoṣṭātēwos à la formation d'un mouvement monastique puissant*.

11 LUSINI, *Studi sul monachesimo eustaziano*; ADANKPO, "Écriture et réécriture hagiographiques du *gadla Ēwoṣṭātēwos*." Absādi, disciple of Ēwoṣṭātēwos, founded the monastery in 1374. Dabra Māryām, which lies today in the Eritrean highlands, soon became a major center of the monastic movement. Concerning this monastery see BAUSI & LUSINI, "Appunti in margine a una nuova ricerca sui conventi eritrei," pp. 20-21. For further demonstration, see ADANKPO, *De la prédication hétérodoxe d'Ēwoṣṭātēwos à la formation d'un mouvement monastique puissant*, pp. 305-307.

12 TURAIEV, *Vita et Miracula Eustathii*, and *Acta s. Eustathii*.

13 COLIN, *Saints fondateurs du christianisme éthiopien*, pp. 75-215.

14 See the manuscript's description in GRÉBAUT & TISSERANT, *Codices Aethiopici Vaticani et Borgiani*, pp. 194-199. For a historical analysis see ADANKPO, "Écriture hagiographique

used as reliable historical sources. Despite its unquestionable qualities, Boris Turaiev's edition can hardly be considered as a medieval testimony because it is the result of many rewritings that took place from the 15th to the 18th century. For all these reasons, I will use the vat. aeth. 46 to edit and translate the passage concerning Nobā. I will also draw comparisons with the new translation proposed by Gérard Colin to better understand the specific features of the ancient variant.¹⁵ This last version clearly testifies a hagiographical rewriting of the earliest one: It displays an amplification of the encounter and has a more emphatic tone.¹⁶

Ēwostātēwos and king Sāb'a Nol according to Vat. aeth. 46 fol. 82v–85r¹⁷

The translated excerpt lies at a crucial narrative sequence. After his conflicts with king Amda Šeyon, Metropolitan Yā'eqob, and governor Warāsina 'Egzi', Ēwostātēwos is forced to exile. He started his journey in Bogos where he met two local governors, Merārā and Ganzāya Egzi, who kindly received him. Thereafter, the hagiographer amply recounts how Ēwostātēwos gave his last blessing to his favorite disciple, Absādi, in Māryā before entering the land of Nobā.

ወበጽሑ:ውስተ:ምድረ:ኖባ:ወሰምዐ:ነገሠ:ኖባ:ከመ:ይመጽኦ:አበ: አዎስጣቴዎስ:ወመጽኦ:ከመ:ይትቀበሎ:ወእነበለ:ይብጥሑ:ኅበ:አበ: ኤዎስጣቴዎስ:ሰምዐ:ነገሥ:ከመ:መጽኦ:ዓለዊያነ:ከመ:ይጽብአዎ: ለነገሥ:ከመ:ላህም:{እነዘ:ይፍሐሎ}:በውስተ:ምቅማሊሁ:ወለአከ: ንጉስ:ሳብአ:ኖል:አስመ:ከማሁ:ስሙ:በዓረቢ:ወበግዕዝሰ:ውሉጌ: ኢትዮጵያ:ብሂል::አስመ:ትትወ*

ከ፪መ:ለመነኮሳት:አለ:ይነግዱ:ኅበ:መቃብረ:አግዚአነ:ወተነፀብ: አገሪሆመ:ወትሰቲ:ፀበሎመ:በተአምኖ:ወበእነዝ:ሰመያቶ:ሰብአ: ኖለ::ወለአከ:ነገሥ:ኅበ:አዎስጣቴዎስ:ወዓሊሁ:እነዘ:ይብል::ለአመ: ለነኦ:ጸብአ:ለነኦ:አግዚአብሔር:በጸሎትከአ:አሎነተ:ዓለዊያነኦ::ወሰበ: አገብአኦ:ዘኩኦ:ገብግብአ:ክብርየኦ:አሁበከ:በዘ:ቦቲኦ:ይዜሀረኦ:ዘቦቲኦ: ትትሐፀብአ:አጌዊከኦ::ወሐረ:ነገሥ|*

et commémoration des saints dans les monastères eustathéens du nord de l'Éthiopie," pp. 321–334.

15 COLIN, *Saints fondateurs du christianisme éthiopien*, pp. 132–134.

16 Monique Goulet theorized the hagiographical rewriting process by analyzing the work of the literary critic Gérard Genette and by studying a vast corpus of Latin hagiographical texts from the early Middle Ages. "Mais il me semble qu'un des phénomènes les plus intéressants du discours hagiographique, pour qui veut l'appréhender dans sa double dimension historique et littéraire, réside dans l'usage de la réécriture, qui instaure un système de renvois entre les textes consacrés à un même saint. On peut donc y observer les infléchissements de l'écriture, et s'interroger sur leurs rapports avec les circonstances historiques, autrement dit sur les effets du contexte sur le texte." GOULET, *Écriture et réécriture hagiographiques*, p. 10.

17 Editorial sigla: * – new folio; | – no punctuation mark.

ወተቀበሎሙ፡ምስለ፡ሰራዊቶች፡ጎበ፡ትዕይንቶሙ፡ለዓለዊኖን፡
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አመነ፡በጸሎ፡አበ፡ኤምስጣቴምስ፡ወሶበ፡ደቤ፡ይተነሠኦ፡አግዚአብሔር፡
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ከሚከ፡ወተሰብሩ፡አለ፡መንገለ፡ሰሚን፡ወቀተልምሙ፡አምኃሐ፡ጽበሐ፡
አስከ፡ዕርበተ፡ፀሐይ፡ወወወወ፡*

ሰብከሙ፡መክሰሳሆሙ፡መሀረኩ፡በጸሎቱ፡ለአቡነ፡ኤምስጣቴምስ፡
ሞክ፡ፀሮ፡ወበአንተ፡ዘ፡አአምረ፡ንጉሥ፡ክብሮ፡ለዝንቱ፡ቀዱስ፡ሶበ፡
አንበልበለ፡በመልዕልተ፡ሰረገለ፡በማክከለ፡ሰማይ፡ወምጅር፡ኦጅንግል፡
አንተ፡አንበለ፡ጥልቀት፡ዘአቢነ፡ኤምስጣቴምስ፡ወፍቅረ፡አግዚአብሔር፡
አንተ፡አልባቲ፡ጽርዓት፡ወሃይማኖት፡አንበለ፡ጽነት፡ንገበአኬ፡ጎበ፡ጥንተ፡
ነገር፡ዘቀጻጺ፡ወአምዝ፡አምፀኦ፡ንጉሥ፡ሰብ*

ኦ፡ኖል፡ሰቢሮ፡ወአተ፡ገበገበ፡ጎበ፡አበ፡ኤምስጣቴምስ፡ወደቤሎ፡ንሣኦ፡
ኦአበ፡ከሙ፡ትተሐፀብ፡በቲ፡አዴከ፡አስመርኪነ፡ጸሎተከ፡ጽንዕተ፡ወአምዝ፡
ተነሥኦ፡አቡነ፡ኤምስጣቴምስ፡ወሐረ፡ፍኖቶ፡

Translation

They [Ēwostātēwos and his fellows] arrived in Nobā land (*medra Nobā*). When the king of Nobā heard that 'abbā Ēwostātēwos had arrived, he came to meet him. Before approaching 'abbā Ēwostātēwos, the king heard that some rebels ('*ālawayān*)¹⁸ had started to wage war against him like a bull being on heat in meadows. Sāb'a Nol sent [...] because his name in Arabic thus means "sons of Ethiopia" (*Weluda 'Ityopyā*) in Ge'ez. Indeed, she welcomed the monks who were accomplishing the pilgrimage close to Our Lord's Sepulchre.²⁰ She would wash their feet and drank [the water blended with] their dust faithfully, that's why she called him Sāb'a Nol.

Afterwards, the king sent a servant to Ēwostātēwos telling him: "If the Lord fights with us against those infidels ('*ālawayān*) thanks to your prayers, when I come back, I will give you this glorious

18 May be translated as "rebels, heretics, outlaw." See LESLAU, *Comparative Dictionary of Ge'ez*, p. 61.

19 There is obviously a hiatus in the text. The manuscripts of the β tradition do not indicate what Sāb'a Nol sent. The hagiographer instead praises the king's faith: "Ce roi de Nobā était juste et de foi droite et croyait au bois de la croix du Christ [...]." COLIN, *Saints fondateurs du christianisme éthiopien*, p. 132.

20 The pronoun "she" refers to Sāb'a Nol's mother. In the β variant, this woman is clearly introduced as his mother, see TURAIEV, *Acta s. Eustathii*, p. 43 and COLIN, *Saints fondateurs du christianisme éthiopien*, pp. 132–133.

*gabgeb*²¹ of mine, which people are proud of, and you will wash your hands in it.” The king met the infidels in their camps with his troops. The infidels numbered four thousand and they surrounded the Christians. He [the king] came in the battle with four horsemen and amidst them was a man who held a cross. The troops completely surrounded the Christians.

Then, *’abbā Ēwoṣtātēwos*, riding a spiritual chariot (*saragallā manfasāwi*), was blazing like a fire above this spiritual chariot (*saragallā manfasāwi*).²² He helped king Sāb’a Nol who trusted the prayer of *’abbā Ēwoṣtātēwos*. When he said: “Let God arise, let his enemies be scattered,”²³ the infidels who were on the eastern side beat the retreat. Again, when he shouted: “Fight against them that fight against me,”²⁴ those of the western side scattered. When he said again: “Deliver me from mine enemies,”²⁵ those who stood on the north side collapsed. Once again when he proclaimed, “Who can be compared unto the Lord?”²⁶ those who were on the southern side were cut into pieces. Thus, the king killed them all from the crack of dawn to twilight. They [the king and his horsemen] took captive their people (*sab’omu*) and seized their livestock. Thanks to *’abuna Ēwoṣtātēwos*’s prayers, he vanquished his enemies. Moreover, because of that, the king recognized the saint’s glory when he started blazing above a chariot [flying] between sky and earth.

O of *’abuna Ēwoṣtātēwos*’s unblemished virginity!

O unceasing love for God!

O unchanging faith!

Let us turn back to our main story. Then, the victorious king Sāb’a Nol took out the *gabgeb* [and gave it] to *’abuna Ēwoṣtātēwos*. He told him: “Take this *’abbā* to wash your hands, because we have seen your mighty prayer.”

Thereafter *’abuna Ēwoṣtātēwos* left and went his way.

21 It may refer to a basin or a bowl in which the guest of honor should wash his hands. It seems close to the Arabic *ḡubb*, which means “well, basin, hollow.” LANE, *An Arabic-English Lexicon*, p. 371. The β variant emphasizes the king’s pledge: “Quand je serai revenu sain et sauf avec le signe de la victoire, les cors de métal battu et les trompettes de bronze qui (sont) enveloppées dans une peau de bœuf – dont s’enorgueillissent ces infidèles –, *’abbā*, (les) ayant brisés, je te (les) donnerai pour laver tes mains et tes pieds.” COLIN, *Saints fondateurs du christianisme éthiopien*, p. 133. Gérard Colin considers that *gabāgebāt*, a word he found impossible to translate, may refer to the horns and trumpets mentioned above, see *ibid.*, p. 134n226.

22 Cf. 2 Ki 2:11. All biblical translations are quoted from the King James Version.

23 Ps 68:1.

24 Ps 35:1.

25 Ps 59:1.

26 Ps 89:6.

Encountering Sāb'a Nol, the mysterious Christian king of Nobā

In which circumstances did Ēwoṣṭātēwos's travel in Nobā take place? This question raises indeed two decisive issues. The first one deals with the literary dimension of this text: Is this account reliable or not? The second one relates to the context of the monk's arrival in this land. What kind of historical information can this extract exactly provide?

The Ethiopian hagiographical texts, together with royal chronicles, are our main sources for the history of Medieval Ethiopia. The *gamlāt* contain information dealing with political, social, economic, or cultural patterns that highlight many aspects of Ethiopian society. Historians are cautious when analyzing these documents and are aware of their specific motives and their social aims.²⁷ Thus, the *gadla* Ēwoṣṭātēwos is a fiction that reinvents the origins of the Ewoṣṭatean movement.²⁸ Yet, most of the characters or the places identified in the *vita* really existed and fit with historical events. For instance, the hagiographer gives an accurate view of Ethiopian politics in the 1330s. He mentions King Amda Ṣeyon and his conflicts with monks, as well as the attempts of emancipation from northern rulers such as Warāsina 'Egzi' or Nagada Krestos.²⁹

In such a case, can this excerpt provide any valuable piece of information? One can wonder if this text strips away the ambiguity related to Nobā. Ēwoṣṭātēwos started his exile around 1337 fleeing from Sarā'ē. Māryā and Nobā represent intermediate stages before his long journey to Egypt in Alexandria and the Scetis desert. Nobā would thus correspond to the geographical location of medieval Nubia. The first mention of Nobā dates back to the 3rd century BCE when Strabo, quoting Eratosthenes, described the Nubai as nomads living in the western shores of the Nile.³⁰ However, it seems quite difficult to identify exactly where Nobā extended in Antiquity. The name Nobā is an ancient one and is known through Aksumite inscriptions and may refer to both a toponym and an ethnonym; Nobā alluding to Nubian speakers. Two stelae dating from the mid 4th century mention a military campaign against Nobā led by the Aksumite king 'Ezānā.³¹ The Ge'ez inscription indicates that the Nobā

27 HIRSCH & KROPP, *Saints, Biographies and History in Africa*; DERAT, "Une nouvelle étape de l'élaboration de la légende hagiographique de Takla Hāymānot," pp. 71–90; BRITA, *I racconti tradizionali sulla "Seconda Cristianizzazione" dell'Etiopia*.

28 ADANKPO, *De la prédication hétérodoxe d'Ēwoṣṭātēwos à la formation d'un mouvement monastique puissant*, pp. 269–414.

29 Vat. aeth. 46 fol. 39r; 42r; 54r–55v. See also *ibid.*, pp. 73–90.

30 See EIDE et al., *Fontes historiae Nubiorum*, n° 109, pp. 557–561.

31 One is in Greek and the other is in Ge'ez. For the Greek one: *Ibid.*, n°299 = BERNAND, DREWES & SCHNEIDER, *Recueil des inscriptions de l'Éthiopie des périodes pré-axoumite et axoumite*, n°271. For the Ge'ez one: *Ibid.*, n°189 = LITTMANN & VON LÜPKE, *Deutsche Aksum Expedition*, pp. 32–42. For a discussion about the meaning of these two inscriptions, see

lived around the Nile and the Atbārā river: this may explain the ancient Ethiopian traditions which claimed that the Nobā inhabited the western grasslands of the Atbārā up to the White Nile.³² Yet, the precise location of Nobā land is unknown, even for the Middle Ages: no place bears this name in the Nubian kingdoms.³³ It seems more likely that this noun actually coincides with a people's name and has been used by some Ethiopian scholars to designate a political entity of medieval Nubia.

Since the 13th century, the Nubian geopolitical position was very precarious. Nubia was under Mamluk power with various degrees of autonomy since Baybars's reign (1260–1277).³⁴ Christianity had progressively lost its predominance in the Nubian states due to Islamic expansion. According to the Arab geographer al-'Umari, in the 1320s the ruler of Makuria, the former prosperous Nubian state, Kanz al-Dawla was a Muslim and the vassal of Egypt.³⁵ Nevertheless, it was not the end of Christian Nubia. Numerous documents shed light on a Christian king named Siti who reigned in Makuria at least from 1331 or 1333, probably after throwing Kanz al-Dawla off the throne.³⁶ Yet, the situation remains unclear after 1333 as Robin Seignobos has recently pointed out.³⁷ Despite having been set aside, Kanz al-Dawla persisted in pretending that he was "king of Dongola," the capital city in 1333.³⁸ This claim clearly sheds light on continuous rivalry between Christian and Muslim dynasties in Makuria in the 14th century. Thus, conflicts were most likely to break during the 1330s between Siti and Kanz al-Dawla.

Who, then, is Sāb'a Nol? Are Sāb'a Nol and Siti the same character? The exile of Ēwostātēwos took place around year 1337. At that time, no source clearly asserts that Siti was still ruling over Makuria but it remains plausible. What can we learn about the mysterious Nubian king? The *gadl* asserts that Sāb'a Nol is a pious Christian king eager to meet the monk: "The king of Nobā heard that 'abbā Ēwostātēwos came in and he went before him to welcome him." His real identity is more confused. The hagiographer introduces a strange gloss about his name: his name in Arabic means in Ge'ez

DINKLER, "König Ezana von Aksum und das Christentum," pp. 121–132, and SEIGNOBOS, "Nobā," pp. 1193–1194.

32 The Atbārā is "the most important river of the eastern Sudan and the last major tributary of the Nile to the north, cf. SMIDT, *Atbārā*, pp. 389–390. See BAIRU TAFLA, *Asma Giyorgis and His Work*, p. 257.

33 No place or ecclesiastical province bears this name. Yet, for an attempt of reconstruction of this site southwards the 5th cataract, see the map in SEIGNOBOS, "Nobā," p. 1194.

34 I would like to thank Robin Seignobos for sharing some results of his PhD thesis: SEIGNOBOS, *L'Égypte et la Nubie à l'époque médiévale*, pp. 346–391.

35 AL-'UMARI, *Masālik al-abṣār*, vol. 4, p. 48.

36 MONNERET DE VILLARD, *Storia della Nubia cristiana*, pp. 220–221. For a broader and recent synthesis, see SEIGNOBOS, *L'Égypte et la Nubie à l'époque médiévale*, pp. 360–363.

37 *Ibid.*, pp. 346–391.

38 *Ibid.*, pp. 360–361.

Weluda 'Ityopyā “sons of Ethiopia,” making the Arabic Sāb'a Nol an equivalent of the Ethiopic Weluda 'Ityopyā. This etymology seems highly dubious as previously noticed,³⁹ because the locution “Sāb'a Nol” is not entirely Arabic and does not mean “sons of Ethiopia” anyway.⁴⁰ It might be a copyist's mistake, who experienced difficulties in transcribing a term he did not understand, or an attempt on his part to attribute a meaning to an unknown proper name. Nor can we reject the idea that this curious etymology comes from an oral tradition that had been somewhat lost.

Anyway, the β version of the text significantly clears up the ambiguity about his ancestry. It clearly introduces the woman as his mother while in the ancient version her identity is not revealed. She is described as a devout and righteous woman who helped pilgrims. No doubt, this allusion emphasizes the king's devotion. Sāb'a Nol is facing an uprising, but its causes remain unknown. The substantive 'ālawiyān which is used can be translated as either rebels, infidels, or outlaw.⁴¹ In this text, those 'ālawiyān are both political and religious dissidents who refuse submission to divine and royal law. The hagiographer does not specify if they are Muslim or not: above all, they represent the pagan enemies. Sāb'a Nol might represent a reminiscence of Siti's fights. Anyway, this hagiographical account is more a recollection of the geopolitical reconfiguration at Makuria, than an accurate description of the historical events opposing Christians and Muslims in the 1330s.

Reinterpreting political and military tensions in Nobā through hagiography

This misunderstanding concerning Nubia and its ruler raises the issue about the way Ethiopian monks knew and perceived this land in the Middle Ages. Although Nubia is not far from Ethiopia, it seems that Ethiopians had loose ties with the inhabitants of Makuria. The first written version of the *gadla Ēwoṣṭātēwos* is completed in the last quarter of the 14th century, though his disciples must have spread oral stories about their master since his death. Ethiopian Christian culture is indeed both oral and written. The saints' stories are told, commented and read as well as being written, copied and rewritten.⁴² Thus, the author – a collective term that actually includes the

39 MONNERET DE VILLARD, *Storia della Nubia cristiana*, p. 221; COLIN, *Saints fondateurs du christianisme éthiopien*, p. 133n220.

40 Josef Marquart supposes that Sāb'a Nol is an Ethio-Arabic hybrid: *sāb'a* could be translated in Ge'ez as “man” or “people” of, and Nol as the Arabic “gift,” MARQUART, *Die Benin-Sammlung des Reichsmuseums für Völkerkunde in Leiden*, p. ccliv. Gérard Colin follows this hypothesis: COLIN, *Saints fondateurs du christianisme éthiopien* 2017, p. 133n220.

41 See LESLAU, *Comparative Dictionary of Ge'ez*, p. 61.

42 COWLEY, *Ethiopian Biblical Interpretation*. See also WION, *Paradis pour une reine*, pp. 73–99.

whole monastic community of Dabra Māryām – has transcribed this event according to oral traditions. Nubia is a place of major interest for monks because it is one of the stages of the pilgrimage towards Egypt and the Holy Land, as the *gadl* recalls: “Indeed, she welcomed the monks who had accomplished the pilgrimage close to Our Lord’s Sepulchre.” If Ēwostātēwos probably met a Nubian ruler during his exile, Ethiopian pilgrims might have also conveyed a vague account of their journey throughout Nubia. Pilgrims were the unique source of information concerning Nubia for Ethiopian monks.⁴³ From all these pieces (oral tradition, information of pilgrims), the hagiographer reconstructed his narrative halfway between fiction and history.

The encounter between the monk and the king is obviously based on biblical models. This account is a rewriting of the famous Old Testament scheme uniting a prophet and a king.⁴⁴ Sāb’a Nol challenges Ewostātēwos to help him as he fights the infidels, and he promises to honor the monk after the victory by letting him wash his hands with the glorious *gabgeb*. This passage seems obscure even if compared to the latter version. The king is probably referring to a prestige item, a symbol of his power, which he wishes to offer to the saint as a sign of his hospitality. The account points definitely out his military skills. Surrounded by countless enemies, Sāb’a Nol and his four horsemen are seriously threatened. Suddenly, Ewostātēwos appears on a spiritual chariot (*saragallā manfasāwi*) and recites psalms of war. Thanks to this miracle, he leads Sāb’a Nol to victory. The monk is explicitly compared to the prophet Elijah who rose to heaven on a fiery chariot in front of his disciple Elisha.⁴⁵ The blazing chariot represents the power of God and his miraculous intervention during a war. The monk fights also with the word of God by singing military-themed psalms. Thus, Ewostātēwos is a mighty mediator like Moses praying on a hill while Joshua was fighting the Amalekites.⁴⁶ This account is a plea to boast Ewostātēwos’s virtues. On one hand, this narrative portrays Ewostātēwos as an outstanding monk with various charismas. On the other hand, Sāb’a Nol seems to be the archetype of the good king who fears God and his law. He is clearly opposed to the Ethiopian king Amda, who is depicted as

43 For a first overview about Ethiopian pilgrims in Egypt and Palestine in the late Middle Ages see CERULLI, *Etiopi in Palestina*; MEINARDUS, “Ethiopian Monks in Egypt,” pp. 243–245; STÖRK, “Dayr al-Muḥarraq,” pp. 116–117; and STÖRK, “Dayr as-Suryān,” pp. 119–120.

44 David and Nathan are the archetypes of this biblical topos. See, for instance, 2 SA 7.

45 “And it came to pass, as they still went on, and talked, that, behold, there appeared a chariot of fire, and horses of fire, and parted them both asunder; and Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven.” 2 Ki 2:11. We find another allusion to the same miracle in the *gadl*, vat. aeth. 46 fol. 106v–108v. For a comment, see ADANKPO, *De la prédication hétérodoxe d’Ēwostātēwos à la formation d’un mouvement monastique puissant*, pp. 361–364.

46 Ex 17:9–13. For other biblical examples, see Jos 6:20.

unholy and violent. The Nubian ruler, who is still vaguely known, becomes the figure of the perfect king.

In the oldest version of the *gadla Ēwoṣṭātēwos*, the hagiographer builds an ideal vision of Nubia identified as a Christian land ruled by a devout, good king. Yet, this image seems far from the actual situation in Nubia in the 1330s. If the political tensions between Muslim and Christian rulers are real in Makuria at that time, the account we have is a hagiographical reinterpretation of these rivalries. Sāb'a Nol, king of Nobā, did never really exist. He is the portrayal of an Old Testament monarch, the ally of a prophet, and a pious man. Such a representation is both the result of a lack of accurate information about Makuria and of the writing of hagiographical fiction. Above all, the *gadla Ēwoṣṭātēwos* shapes a distinctive image of Nobā. Nobā becomes a major route to Holy Land, a land for pilgrims.⁴⁷ The geopolitical changes which occurred in the Nile region in the 14th had certainly aroused fear amongst Ethiopian monks. The hagiography is the expression of monastic fears and ideal concerning Nubia, still perceived as a major stage on the route to Egypt and Palestine.⁴⁸

47 To compare with the very few traces of Nubian kingdoms in medieval and early modern Ethiopian itineraries, see CRAWFORD, *Ethiopian itineraries*, c. 1400–1524.

48 For a new evidence of the importance of Nubia for the religious relations between Ethiopians and Egyptians see LAJTAR & OCHALEA, "An Unexpected Guest in the Church of Sonqi Tino," pp. 257–268.

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A Note towards Quantifying the Medieval Nubian Diaspora

Adam Simmons

Throughout the Christian medieval period of the kingdoms of Nubia (c. sixth–fifteenth centuries), ideas, goods, and peoples traversed vast distances. Judging from primarily external sources, the Nubian diaspora has seldom been thought of as vast, whether in number or geographical scope, both in terms of the relocated and a non-permanently domiciled diaspora. Prior to the Christianisation of the kingdoms of Nobadia, Makuria, and Alwa in the sixth century, likely Nubian delegations, consisting of “Ethiopes,” were received in both Rome and Constantinople alongside ones from neighbouring peoples, such as the Blemmyes and Aksumites. Yet, medieval Nubia is more often seen as inclusive rather than diasporic. This brief discussion will further show that Nubians were an interactive society within the wider Mediterranean, a topic most commonly seen in the debate on Nubian trade.¹ Above all, it argues that Nubians had a long relationship with Mediterranean societies that has primarily been overlooked in scholarship. Whilst the evidence presented here is not aimed to be definitive, it does highlight that Nubia’s Mediterranean connections may even have been more diverse than what Giovanni Ruffini argued for in his book *Medieval Nubia* whilst describing Nubia as a “Mediterranean society in Africa.”² May we even argue for a more developed thesis of interaction? What about the Nubian societies throughout the Mediterranean who interacted with other communities both spiritually and financially? It will be argued here that these questions should be revisited and have potential to further expand Ruffini’s Mediterranean thesis.

One limitation to such a study is that of focus. Here, only the Christian diaspora will be discussed. Without doubt, the Nubian presence within the Islamic realms was extensive, not least due to

1 For example OSMAN, *Economy and Trade*, pp. 113–127 compared to ADAMS, *Qasr Ibrim*, pp. 211–212, 249–250.

2 RUFFINI, *Medieval Nubia*.

the exchange of slaves as a result of the *baqt*. Quantifying the number of Nubians conscripted into the Muslim armies or the scale of other forms of slavery, notably of harems, would be impossible. However, the existence of Nubians as far east as Baghdad is widely accepted and is illustrative of the interconnectedness of the Islamic world, with more scepticism about the presence of Nubians in Europe.³ In part, this is largely due to the fact that the number of Nubian slaves in Europe can never be known, given vague references simply to “negri,” rather than to a more specific ethnonym.⁴ Although this Nubian slave diaspora is not the focus of this article, it is important to remember nonetheless. The Nubians in discussion here, due to the nature of the sources and their respective understanding of Nilotic peoples, should properly be seen specifically as the Nubians of Makuria (people from *Nubia*, *al-Nūba*, or an associated toponym/ethnonym). Whilst a quantifiable Nubian diaspora cannot be ascertained from the sources, it is the intention of this brief article to highlight the geographical scope of the diaspora and to suggest that Nubians were fully active members in numerous distant interactions.

Additionally, there is a geographical limitation to such a study due to the available source-base. As no internal sources discuss a Nubian diaspora, the chief sources for distant Nubians were written in the north, thus primarily creating a Mediterranean focus, centred on Egypt and the Holy Land. That said, the scale of western, eastern, and southern diasporas should not be forgotten either. For example, military expansion to the west is known, with Nubians seemingly regularly vying for control of trade routes along its western border with the Kingdom of Kanem and the Zaghawa.⁵ Nubians who travelled westward would also have likely explored the trans-Saharan trade networks, just as North-West Africans travelled to Nubia.⁶ Likewise, trade presumably inspired Nubians to travel further south and east down branches of the Nile, possibly even as far as the regions surrounding the northern Great Lakes, or eastwards towards Ethiopia and to follow the riches of the Red Sea and Indian Ocean trade.⁷ Regrettably, the isolated remains of a monastery

3 The journey of Prince George in 836 being the most famous event: VANTINI, “Le roi Kirki de Nubie a Baghdad: Un ou deux voyages?”; SEIGNOBOS, “Le médecin et le singe du calife.” For thoughts on evidence of a more permanent Nubian presence in the city, see Seignobos, “Bāb al-Nūbi.”

4 CHRIST, “Differentiated Legality,” pp. 305–306. One example of an identifiable Nubian slave is a girl called Mubāraka who was bought from Alexandria in 1419: Ibid., pp. 305, 310. For more on this slave, see BAUDEN, “L’achat d’esclaves,” pp. 271–304.

5 For example: OCHAŁA, “A King of Makuria in Kordofan.”

6 Such connections are stated by Ibn Sulaym in the tenth century: KHEIR, “Contribution,” p. 51.

7 Ibn Sulaym alludes to possible Nubian settlements further south than Alwa and toward Ethiopia, but without any indication of distances: Ibid., p. 52. Further, it may be suggested that through future linguistic reconstruction of Northern East Sudanic languages, of which

at Jabal al-‘Ayn (c. 365 miles southwest of Soba) are the southernmost evidence for a permanent Christian Nubian presence known to date.⁸ Although the nature of the sources limits our knowledge of these areas and interactions, an understanding of Nubian diasporas should not be limited only to the wider Mediterranean region.

Egypt and the Holy Land

The main Nubian gateway to the Mediterranean was its connections with its northern neighbour, Egypt. Egypt has had a long, established history of a Christian Nubian presence, although Nubians are mostly noted in relatively late texts, primarily dating only to the fourteenth century, which is significant for attempts at quantification. The principle authors who witnessed Nubians throughout Egypt were Abū al-Makārim (c. 1200), Symon Semeonis (1323), Jacopo da Verona (1335), Niccolò da Poggibonsi (1345–1350), and Ludolph von Sudheim (1350). A Nubian presence was still substantial enough for Bernhard von Breydenbach (1496–1499) to be able to annotate his own depiction of the alphabet of the Nubians, though he actually depicted the Coptic alphabet.⁹ Bernhard does not state how he learnt the alphabet, nor does he address where the information was gathered, be it in the Holy Land or Egypt. Regardless, a Christian Nubian presence existed in Egypt even throughout Nubia’s fifteenth-century decline, as also noted by Gabriele Capodilista in 1458, for example.¹⁰

One of the earliest pilgrimage centres to develop was situated on the Egyptian–Nubian border. Philae had been a shared pre-Christian pilgrimage centre, which kept its influential status following the Christian conversion of Egypt and then, later, Nubia.¹¹ Through the adoption of pre-Christian sites and the development of new ones, Nubians soon established numerous pilgrimage centres throughout Egypt. Such a centre, which became important to numerous Christian groups, was located at the Wadi al-Natrun (Scetis in antiquity).¹² Its lasting influence is reflective in King Giorgios IV’s choice to retire to the complex in 1158.¹³

Nubian is a member, an understanding of a southerly Nubian diaspora could be postulated, if not maintained. For example, we could follow an approach which somewhat inverts that of William Adams, or take a more expansive study similar to Robin Thelwall, although any linguistic approach can only suggest a presence of a permanent diaspora giving time for languages to interact and evolve, and cannot trace the mobile diaspora, such as traders, unless such trade was occurring for a prolonged period: ADAMS, “Coming of Nubian Speakers”; THELWALL, “Linguistic Aspects.”

8 EGER, “Ein mittelalterliches Kloster.”

9 ARNOLD VON HARFF, *Pilgerfahrt*, p. 152.

10 CERULLI, *Etiopi in Palestina*, p. 1:255.

11 CRUZ-URIBE, “The Death of Demotic Philae”; DIJKSTRA, *Philae*.

12 AL-SURIANY, “Identification of the Monastery of the Nubians in Wadi al-Natrun.”

13 VAN GERVEN OEI, “The Old Nubian Memorial for King George.”

Perhaps unsurprisingly given the location of the complex at the Wadi al-Natrun, Nubians also established centres on either side of it at both Alexandria and Cairo. The survival of the Old Nubian Miracle of St Mina is suggestive of an importance that Alexandria came to have as a pilgrimage site, although no texts attest to a Nubian presence otherwise.¹⁴ A Nubian presence should also be expected in relation to messengers to the Alexandrian Patriarchate before its relocation to Cairo during the reign of Pope St. Christodoulos (1046–77).¹⁵ It is unclear whether the move of the Patriarchate had any effect on the development of Nubian pilgrimage to either Alexandria or Cairo, or, indeed, had a detrimental effect. References to Nubians in Cairo all postdate this event, suggesting the relocation of the Patriarchate most likely had a positive effect on pilgrimage development. The new importance of Cairo was established almost immediately as King Solomon was invited by the vizier to Cairo following his abdication to the convent of St Onophrios in 1079.¹⁶ According to Abū al-Makārim, writing c. 1200, Nubians (*Nūbah*) even shared a sacred space with other groups – Greeks (*Rūm*), Franks (*Faranj*), and Ethiopians (*Ḥabasha*) – whose envoys would be received at the court in Cairo where they would customarily worship alongside each other at the fountain at al-Maṭariyya.¹⁷ The fact that no Latin European texts, which form the basis for current discussions on the Nubian presence in the Holy Land and Egypt, attest to this shared space further highlights how far the Nubian diaspora may be underestimated once Eastern texts are taken into consideration. Further questions regarding Nubian diasporic interactions with other groups are raised with the understanding that Niccolo da Poggibonsi also stated that he preached mass to Nubians, presumably in Latin or Italian alongside an interpreter, at the Church of St Martin near Cairo in the mid-fourteenth century.¹⁸

Nubians were not restricted simply to commercial centres either. Elsewhere, they were seen at the Monastery of St Antony and St Macarius on the Red Sea, suggesting a rather widespread presence across Egypt.¹⁹ Nubians do not usually appear in the area surrounding the Red Sea except at the above monastery. Currently, no

14 The Old Nubian Miracle of Saint Mina attests to the saint's influence on Nubian pilgrims whom would have travelled to Alexandria to venerate his shrine: TSAKOS, "On Place Names Used by Nubians for Places Outside Nubia," pp. 232–236. An early Byzantine coin, minted in Alexandria in the sixth century or later, has also been found at Old Dongola. Though the causal relationship between the coin and its context cannot be known, its appearance further suggests some Alexandrian interaction: LICHOCKA, "12 Nummia Coin."

15 It was said that the Patriarchate moved further south because of the number of messengers being received from Nubia and Ethiopia: SAWIRUS, *History of the Patriarchs*, pp. II.III: 3273–28.

16 MONNERET DE VILLARD, *Storia della Nubia*, pp. 128–129.

17 ABŪ AL-MAKĀRIM, *Tarikh al-kanā'is wa-l-adyura*, p. I:24.

18 NICCOLO DA POGGIBONSI, *Libro d'oltramare*, p. II:82.

19 LUDOLPHI RECTORIS, *De itinere terre sanctae*, p. 61.

evidence of Nubians at the monastery of St Catherine on Mount Sinai has been found, either in visitor accounts or through the presence of Old Nubian manuscripts.²⁰ At first glance, it would appear odd that Nubians did not visit or reside in the monastery at times given the multitude of other Christian groups known to have done so. Is it possible that Nubians had been present but they wrote in either Greek or Arabic instead of Old Nubian, appearing to be absent whilst their works have been subsequently catalogued as works of others? Or that their legacy is in the artwork of some manuscripts as opposed to the texts? Such study would not quantify a Nubian presence, but it would further enhance our understanding of the extent of the Nubian diaspora.

There was also a Nubian presence in the Holy Land adjacent to Egypt.²¹ Unfortunately, identifying Nubians in the Holy Land during the first millennium is largely a problem of the identification of toponyms and ethnonyms, though it can be partially achieved. For instance, the otherwise unknown sixth-century Piacenza Pilgrim describes seeing men from “Ethiopia” (*homines a parte Aethiopiae*) in Jerusalem and Elusa who were said to have had their “nostrils split, ears cut, boots on their feet, and rings on their toes” by orders of Emperor Trajan, suggesting that these were actually men from northern Sudan as opposed to Aksumites.²² Otherwise, the scant references that do enlighten the situation only use the vague ethnonym “Ethiopian,” such as the two “Ethiops” met by St Willibald on his pilgrimage to the Holy Land in the eighth century.²³ Problematically, Nubians only get referenced as such (i.e., as *Nubiani* or similar) from the twelfth century onwards, although, due to the perceived available sources, their presence has primarily only been viewed through Latin European sources written following the establishment of the Crusader States at the turn of the twelfth century.²⁴ Principally, according to such Latin European sources, Nubians were found in the

20 Dating from the building of the monastery to the present day, manuscripts have been found written in Arabic, Syriac, Georgian, Slavonic, Polish, Hebrew, Ethiopian, Armenian, Latin, and Persian.

21 Enrico Cerulli's *Etiopi in Palestina* is still the seminal work on the topic but he often combines “Ethiopians,” “Nubians,” and “Jacobites” in his findings: CERULLI, *Etiopi in Palestina*. See also MEINARDUS, “The Christian Kingdoms of Nubia,” pp. 159–164; CECCARELLI MOROLLI, “Le fonti occidentali medievali”; CECCARELLI MOROLLI, “Ricerche.”

22 ANTONINI PLACENTINI, “Itinerarium,” p. 182.

23 HYGEBURG, “Vita Willibaldi Episcopi Eichstetensis,” pp. 100–101.

24 The German monk Theodoric was the first Latin pilgrim since the establishment of the Crusader States to explicitly note them in 1172: THEODORIC, “Libellus de Locis Sanctis,” p. 152. However, the Nubian presence may even have been much more extensive than the European sources suggest. For instance, Nubians (*Kūshaye*), along with Ethiopians (*Hindaye*), are implied to have been present throughout the Holy Land in the 1120s by Michael the Syrian, though the text is unclear whether they should be associated with the Holy Land or Egypt, decades prior to Theodoric's “first” observational reference, challenging the notion of a lack of a Nubian presence during the first decades of Crusader rule as suggested by their absence in early Latin European accounts: MICHAEL THE SYRIAN, *Chronique*, p. IV:608.

Holy Sepulchre,²⁵ Nazareth,²⁶ and Bethlehem.²⁷ There is debate over whether the chapel on Mount Calvary had always been a place of worship for Nubians or whether it had been specifically gifted by the Sultan after 1333.²⁸ Regardless of this fact, the Sultan's gift would suggest that there was a prior presence in it for worship, even if it was not permanent. Although texts cannot be necessarily taken literally without certain rhetorical limitations, Burchard of Mount Sion, who visited the Holy Land between 1274–1284, stated that there was an infinite multitude (*infinita multitudo*) of Nubian monks amongst those of other denominations in the Holy Land.²⁹ Ludolph of Sudheim, in the mid-fourteenth century, calculates the combined number of this “infinite multitude” of Eastern Christians, including Nubians, at 400 monks and 40 converts (*conversi*).³⁰ One tantalising piece of evidence for a Nubian presence in the Holy Land comes in the form of a possible Nubian at the Crusader court called Guido of “Nubie” who is listed as an otherwise unknown witness to three separate letters in 1226, although it is impossible to know whether this man really was from the Sudan.³¹ Christian Nubians are repeatedly referenced in the Holy Land even into the sixteenth century.³² Whilst such late texts could simply have been continuing the tradition of noting Nubians in the Holy Land and at specific shrines, it does beg the question: how long did the Christian Nubian diaspora survive following the collapse of the Christian kingdoms? Additionally, was their survival explicitly linked to the degree of the success of their integration into wider networks?

This Nubian diaspora seemingly utilised the pilgrimage and trade networks of the Holy Land to great effect and were said to have been on Cyprus at least as late as the mid-fourteenth century.³³ Elsewhere, Nubian messengers appear to have been present in

25 Some examples are: CERULLI, *Etiopi in Palestina*, p. 1:220; BERNARD, *Guide-Book to Palestine*, p. 9; HORSTMANN, *The Three Kings of Cologne*, p. 263; JACOPO DA VERONA, *Liber Peregrinationis*, pp. 32, 39; LUDOLPHI RECTORIS, *De itinere terre sanctae*, p. 78; and LUDOLPHUS DE SUDHEIM, “De itinere Terre Sancte,” pp. II:352–353; NICCOLO DA POGGIBONSI, *Libro d’oltramare*, pp. I:94–95, 103–104.

26 NICCOLO DA POGGIBONSI, *Libro d’oltramare*, p. I:269.

27 JACOPO DA VERONA, *Liber Peregrinationis*, pp. 60–61.

28 DE SANDOLI, *The Peaceful Liberation of the Holy Places in the XIV Century*, pp. 54–55. It was Ludolph of Sudheim who initially wrote in c. 1350 that the Sultan had gifted the chapel to the Nubians in “his time”: LUDOLPHI RECTORIS, *De itinere terre sanctae*, p. 72.

29 BURCHARD OF MOUNT SION, “Descriptio Terrae Sanctae,” pp. 89–90.

30 LUDOLPHUS DE SUDHEIM, “De itinere Terre Sancte,” p. II:346.

31 MAYER and RICHARD, *Die Urkunden der lateinischen Könige von Jerusalem*, pp. III:1075, 1092, 1099. See also his appearance in a letter dated to 1243 where “Nubie” appears as “Nubre”: III:1200. It is possible that Guido was merely from a fief called Nubie in Tripoli, noted in a letter of 1163: RÖHRICHT, *Regesta Regni Hierosolymitani*, no. 378, p. 99.

32 For instance, Ludwig Tschudi mentions Nubians in the Holy Land in 1519: LUDWIG TSCHUDI, *Bilgerfahrt*, pp. 147, 191–192, 199, 216, 306.

33 PHILIPPE DE MÉZIÈRES, *Life of Saint Peter Thomas*, pp. 99–100. This should also be viewed in light of a possible Nubian woman depicted as a donor in a small fresco in the fourteenth-century Carmelite church in Famagusta. The image is no longer visible, with

Syria. Our evidence is circumstantial but evidence for knowledge of Syriac in Nubia, despite no Syriac works currently being found, suggests that the language was for communication and, thus, facilitated a network of messengers.³⁴ Similarly, it can be suggested that Nubians may have had some occasional presence in Armenia, too. The only evidence for this is a statement by Hayton of Corycus who, whilst in France, wrote in his Crusade treatise that Armenians could be used as messengers between the Latin Papacy and the Nubians.³⁵ If this was the case, it may be presumed that some Nubians may have travelled to Armenia as messengers at various times in order for Hayton, who was also a prince of Armenia, to advertise seemingly strong communication networks between Nubia and Armenia. As this treatise was written before the more influential text of Marino Sanudo who further emphasised the possibility of allying with Nubians in the early fourteenth century, it would appear that any rhetoric in Hayton's text may be viewed less suspiciously and is indeed reflective of networks of communication. In turn, such networks appear to have been utilised throughout the Mediterranean.

With such an expansive presence throughout Egypt and the Holy Land, Nubians were able to interact with further networks and were not merely limited to neighbouring lands. Although these conjoining lands are most documented for a Nubian presence, this may largely be reflective of the geography and not necessarily of a large-scale Nubian absence further afield. Their larger presences in Egypt and the Holy Land did, however, enable Nubians to further interact with other Mediterranean societies and supported their role as non-peripheral active members within the wider Mediterranean world.

The wider Mediterranean

Travelling great distances using such networks and routes should be considered no surprise. It would be safe to presume that an undocumented Nubian diaspora existed like that of other prominent groups, such as Italian merchants, who did leave behind evidence of their presence. That said, just how expansive was the Nubian diaspora and what can we learn by broadening our approach?

our understanding of the image restricted to its recorded depiction in the late nineteenth century, and is not accompanied by any text, though her depiction may suggest a Nubian origin. If true, this poses further questions for the degree of interaction by the either resident or visiting possible Nubian presence on the island: BOROWSKI, "In the Midst of Enemies?" pp. 103–106.

34 Ibn al-Nadīm notes the Nubian knowledge of Syriac in the tenth century: IBN AL-NADĪM, *Kitāb al-Fihrist*, I:119; an otherwise unknown twelfth-century Syriac alphabet has also been found in Nubia: VAN GINKEL & VAN DER VLIET, "A Syriac Alphabet from Qasr Ibrim." The current corpus of texts found in Nubia has been discussed in OCHALA, "Multilingualism in Christian Nubia," pp. 26–27.

35 HAYTON OF CORYCUS, "La Flor des Estoires," p. 247.

The first region which needs to be further explored for the presence of Nubians is Byzantium.³⁶ Unfortunately, Greek sources offer little in the way of revealing the existence of Nubians within Byzantium, but, apart from any potential migration following service in the army (most specifically in the fifth and sixth centuries when Egypt was still under Byzantine control) and the exchange of messengers, Nubians are not known for appearing within the Empire. However, this would seem unlikely given that Nubians would surely have travelled to the Byzantine capital, especially during the sixth century, in order to learn more about Christianity and the Byzantine style of architecture, which became prominent in Nubia following its conversion by Byzantine missionaries. If not, the alternative would be to suggest that far more Byzantines were present in Nubia during this time than the mere few companions of the missionaries Julian and Longinus to act as both missionaries and artisans. A similar undocumented movement of Nubians may also have occurred in the Italian peninsula towards the end of the first millennium. The Anastasis scene at Banganarti in Nubia (c. 850-c. 1050) has been argued by Bogdan Żurawski to look notably “Italian,” specifically when compared with the Anastasis scenes at San Clemente and San Giovanni e Paulo for their dark contrasting backgrounds as opposed to traditional Byzantine or Coptic styles, including the one other Nubian example at Faras. If Żurawski’s comments are correct, this would suggest that either Italian artisans travelled to Nubia or Nubian artisans travelled within Italy in order to explain the Banganarti scene’s style.³⁷ Artistic and architectural influences can only remain tentative, but they do suggest a possible otherwise unknown Nubian diaspora.

One later source suggests a Byzantine use of Nubian soldiers. Agapius, Bishop of Manjib in Syria, describes in his tenth-century text Nubian (*Nūbah*) soldiers aiding Anastasius, Patriarch of Constantinople, against Emperor Leo III in the eighth century.³⁸ Consistently, these Nubians have been translated as Bulgars or Georgians, primarily based on the apparent unlikelihood of them being actual Nubians despite being described as “black” (*aswad*).³⁹ There is no reason to suggest here that the Nubians in question were not indeed African Nubians especially being described as “black” and with communication channels still being open, particularly between the

36 Byzantine-Nubian relations more generally have been explored, but this scholarship has not seriously challenged the perception of a two-way exchange and has focused primarily on the influence of Byzantium on Nubia: FRENK, “Nubia as an Outpost of Byzantine Cultural Influence”; DEMICHELI, “I regni cristiani di Nubia e i loro rapporti col mondo bizantino”; GODLEWSKI, “Nubia, Egypt and Byzantium”; ZACHAROPOULOU, *Νουβία και Βυζάντιο*.

37 ŻURAWSKI, “The Anastasis Scene.”

38 AGAPIUS, *Kitab al-‘Unwan*, p. 503 [243].

39 Ibid., p. 503n3; HOYLAND, *Theophilus of Edessa*, p. 218n611.

patriarchs of Byzantium and Alexandria. Other intriguing cases appear in the work of the twelfth-century Archbishop of Thessaloniki, Eustathios, who describes “black abbots” (μαυροηγούμενον) and “black monks” (μαυροχαλόγηρων) in Thessaloniki,⁴⁰ and the “black men” (described as *aswad*) who were guards at the palace at Constantinople witnessed by Hārūn b. Yahyā whilst in captivity in c. 886.⁴¹ Were these Nubians too? It should also be noted that due to the mistaken reading of the Russian “на Черном великом уболе” (great black embolon) in Sofia de Khitrowo’s 1872 French translation of Anthony, Archbishop of Novgorod’s, c. 1200 pilgrimage text to “embolon des Noirs,” it is still wrongly maintained by some historians that Africans were in fact present in Constantinople.⁴² Africans, and indeed Nubians, may well have been present in the city, but Anthony’s text does not bear witness to it.

Could, then, Byzantium host Nubians at its court? According to Eustathios, “Ethiopians” could be observed at the court of Emperor Manuel I in 1173/1174 amongst other foreign peoples.⁴³ Nubians may have been welcomed at the Byzantine court, although Eustathios himself may have been employing rhetoric, or unable to determine who the “Ethiopians” actually were. That said, the use of a court translator in arguably the most well-known appearance of a Nubian in Constantinople suggests that Nubians were indeed hosted by the Byzantine court. No single event arguably reveals more about the Nubian Mediterranean diaspora than the arrival of a Nubian king in Constantinople in 1203 who was welcomed by the Byzantine emperor.⁴⁴ The king, probably Moses George,⁴⁵ was reported by Robert of Clari to have been on a pilgrimage, already via Jerusalem, in which his entourage had decreased from sixty in number to two upon reaching Constantinople, but who still intended to travel to Rome and Santiago de Compostela before returning to Jerusalem for the king to die there if he lived long enough.⁴⁶ A Nubian presence in Je-

40 EUSTATHIOS, *Opuscula*, p. 342. That is the opinion posited by Kizobo O’Bweng-Okwess and Ray Kea: O’BWENG-OKWESS, “Byzance en guerre contre les Arabes et les Noirs d’Afrique du IXe au XIIe,” p. 102; KEA, “Mediterranean in Africa,” p. 437. Though in all likelihood, these were Benedictines, known as “black monks” for their clothing, not their ethnicity.

41 GOEJE, *Bibliotheca geographorum arabicorum*, p. VII:120. See O’BWENG-OKWESS, “Le témoignage d’Haroun ibn-Yahya.”

42 СΑΥΒΑΙΤΟΒ, *Путешествие новгородского архиепископа Антония*, p. 43; DE KHRITROWO, *Itinéraires russes en Orient*, p. 105. This mistake has long been known, as pointed out by Rodolphe Janin, but is still ignored: JANIN, “Études de topographie byzantine,” p. 141n5. For example, it appears in: O’BWENG-OKWESS, “Η παρουσία τῶν Νεγροαφρικανῶν,” pp. 93–94; KEA, “Mediterranean in Africa,” p. 437.

43 EUSTATHII THESSALONICENSIS, *Opera Minora*, pp. 263–264.

44 ROBERT DE CLARI, *La Conquête de Constantinople*, p. 130. For the debate on the event, see ROSTKOWSKA, “The Visit of a Nubian King to Constantinople in AD. 1203”; HENDRICKX, “Un roi Africain à Constantinople en 1203”; FIACCADORI, “Un re di Nubia a Constantinopoli nel 1203.”

45 RUFFINI, *Medieval Nubia*, p. 251.

46 ROBERT DE CLARI, *La Conquête de Constantinople*, p. 130.

rusalem is not problematic, neither is one particularly in Constantinople; the questions arise of any such presence in either Rome or Spain. There are no texts which note Nubians in Rome during the medieval period but they are listed at Santiago de Compostela. In a Latin codex, “Nubiani” appear amongst the many Christian groups said to worship at the site in the twelfth century, though its authenticity has been questioned.⁴⁷ However, in addition, a separate Arabic reference to Nubians (*Nūbah*) at the site can be found in a text dated to 1312 in relation to the year 997.⁴⁸ That said, the Nubian diaspora, as with the African diaspora more generally, should currently be seen to be underestimated. So much so that questions which arise from the Nubian king’s journey – such as how did he and his entourage supply themselves? – are currently without any answer in either Nubian or medieval European economic scholarship. Was a Nubian diaspora integrated enough into the wider Mediterranean, either spiritually or fiscally, to either access institutions such as banks and hostels with relative ease or to be able to seek fellow Christian charity to fund such extensive travel?

Additional questions of social integration are also posed by the Nubian diaspora, such as what languages were used for communication between groups? Arabic would appear to be the most likely answer, especially in the eastern Mediterranean and Spain, whilst the knowledge of Syriac in Nubia suggests alternative means of communication in Syria. Yet, what about in Cyprus and Europe? How suggestive could the use of *santa* (σάντα) in a late-twelfth-century Old Nubian document be for at least some Nubian knowledge of Italian for trade?⁴⁹ The use of Arabic and Greek appear to be discounted in the encounter with the Nubian king in Constantinople as a translator was needed to speak to the king in “his language”; both Arabic and Greek would have been recognised in the Greek court and amongst the Crusaders to inform Robert de Clari’s choice of words for his description.⁵⁰ Communication in Arabic, or even Greek, may have formed the basis of diplomatic exchanges, but some pidgin knowledge of other languages should be expected where interactions with Europeans were common. Coptic was known in the Holy Land by some Crusaders, possibly also facilitating communication with Nubians.⁵¹ Equally, as difficult as it is to suggest Nubian means of communication, it should not be discounted that limited numbers of Europeans may have known certain languages to communicate

47 SEIGNOBOS, “L’autre Ethiopie,” pp. 52–53.

48 LIBER SANCTI IACOBI, *Codex Calixtinus*, pp. I:148–149; IBN ‘IDHĀRĪ AL-MARRĀKUSHĪ, *Kitāb al-bayān al-mughrib fī akhbār al-Andalus wa-al-Maghrib*, p. II:296.

49 The Qasr Ibrim Archive at the British Museum, PQI inv. 74.1.29/7A. The reference was first noted by Giovanni Ruffini: RUFFINI, *Medieval Nubia*, pp. 262–263.

50 ROBERT DE CLARI, *La Conquête de Constantinople*, p. 130.

51 ASLANOV, “Languages in Contact.”

with Nubians too. Intimate daily interaction, especially in Jerusalem and Cairo, would have developed knowledge, specifically regarding language use. As a Nubian presence throughout the Mediterranean is documented, their means of communication and social and economic integration would have been vital, though unfortunately no evidence exists for such answers. Future studies, however, and still to be discovered sources may one day be able to shed light on these problems.

This brief discussion does not wish to inflate figures; instead its intention is to highlight that there is plenty of scope for enhancing our understanding of the scale and diversity of medieval Nubians living and travelling outside of the Sudan during the medieval period and the social and economic history of Nubians outside of Nobadia, Makuria, and Alwa. The Nubian diaspora, though limited in our evidence, was relatively prosperous and far-reaching. Even without taking into account further possible references and fixating only on those which use the ethnonym of "Nubian," the picture is clear – many Nubians travelled widely throughout the medieval period, whether for military reasons, pilgrimage, or trade, and were particularly active in the wider Mediterranean. Their presence in Egypt and the Holy Land is particularly well known, yet sporadic references to Nubians across Europe which have received less attention appear too. Although it is impossible to suggest a number for the size of the Nubian diaspora, whether as a whole or by focusing on certain locations, their wide-spread presence outside of traditionally viewed arenas, such as Egypt or the Holy Land, enables the exciting possibility of plenty of new avenues for future study to be undertaken. Moreover, the diaspora poses many more questions for its role in Mediterranean society, particularly questions of communication and interaction that go hand in hand when a presence is noted, which have so far been neglected. The present limited or lack of sources should not stop these questions being asked. Indeed, not only was Nubia an integrated society within the wider Mediterranean, one that arguably should even be viewed as more interactive than has previously been postulated, but was also likely to have been involved in wider African and Asian networks too. Medieval Nubians had international interactions.

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The Memories of Byzantium as Preserved in Nubia's Political Ideology after the 7th Century CE

Effrosyni Zacharopoulou

This study mainly focuses on the formation of the dominant ideology that Nubian rulers conveyed to the Nubian people and aims to show how the ideological influences from Byzantium integrated with the indigenous background into Nubia's political system and created a unique Afro-Byzantine state.

By the term Nubia this paper mainly refers to the united Kingdom of Nubia with its capital at Old Dongola, which was constituted by the states of Nobadia and Makuria, the two of the three states that emerged as heirs to the Meroitic kingdom. In all probability, the merging of these two kingdoms occurred in the 7th century, as a consequence of the Arab conquest of Egypt and the Nubians' attempt to stave off the Arab threat coming from the north.¹

This choice is not without reason, as excavations have been carried out more extensively in this part of the Middle Nile Valley due to the construction of dams on the Nile.² In the third medieval Nubian kingdom – Alodia – archaeological excavations are still limited and less fruitful. Moreover, after the 10th century Alodia appears to be in a close political association with Old Dongola.³

- 1 About the union of the kingdoms of Nobadia and Makuria and the various aspects of this fact see ADAMS, *Nubia*, pp. 453–454; EDWARDS, *The Nubian Past*, pp. 236–237; GODLEWSKI, “The Rise of Makuria,” pp. 58–61; JAKOBIELSKI, *Faras III*, pp. 35–36; ŁAJTAR, “On the Name of the Capital of the Nubian Kingdom of Makuria,” p. 129; MUNRO-HAY, “Kings and Kingdoms of Ancient Nubia,” pp. 96–99; WELSBY, *The Medieval Kingdoms of Nubia*, pp. 83–84; ZACHAROPOULOU, *Νουβία και Βυζάντιο*, pp. 137–140.
- 2 EDWARDS, “The Archaeology of Sudan and Nubia,” pp. 212–213.
- 3 See Ibn Hawqal and Mas’udi in VANTINI, *Oriental Sources*, pp. 162–163, 166, and 130 respectively. See also GODLEWSKI, “Archbishop Georgius of Dongola,” p. 269; JAKOBIELSKI, *Faras III*, p. 73; Id., “North and South in Christian Nubian Culture,” p. 234; MUNRO-HAY, “Kings and Kingdoms of Ancient Nubia,” pp. 103, 108–109; OCHALA, “Multilingualism in Christian Nubia,” pp. 19–20; PLUMLEY, “The Christian Period at Qasr Ibrim,” p. 106; VANTINI, *Christianity in the Sudan*, pp. 117–118, 132; WELSBY & DANIELS, *Soba*, p. 7; WELSBY, *The Medieval*

The cultural and ideological influences from Byzantium that penetrated into Nubia are already traceable at the very early stages of the formation of the Nubian kingdoms⁴ and became more safely established with their Christianization in the 6th century, after two missions were sent from Constantinople by Justinian and Theodora.⁵ From that moment onwards, Nubia became an integral part of the Christian world for about a thousand years, even though, from the mid-7th century onwards, the expansion of Islam kept Nubia apart from the Byzantine Empire and the Christian Mediterranean World.

Archaeological findings in pre-Christian tombs indicate that Christianity had found its way into Nubia before its official Christianisation.⁶ However, it was established as an official and widespread religion only after the king and aristocracy were converted to it by the Byzantine missionaries.⁷ Therefore, we can say that in Nubia Christianity developed in the opposite direction of the way it did in the Mediterranean world, where Christianity first spread amongst the people before becoming appropriated by the elite.⁸ In Nubia, on the contrary, it was transplanted first throughout the upper echelons of society from Byzantium. Nevertheless, Christianity exerted a huge amount of influence over every aspect of life in Medieval Nubia.⁹

Nubia's Christianisation was politically motivated. The archaeological findings from post-Meroitic royal tombs of Ballana and Qustul point out to a probable Byzantine involvement in the emergence of the state of Nobadia.¹⁰ Thus, Constantinople ensured both its em-

Kingdoms of Nubia, p. 89; ZACHAROPOULOU, *Νουβία και Βυζάντιο*, pp. 181–186; ŻURAWSKI, "The Southern Dongola Reach Survey Project, 2002," pp. 241–244.

4 WELSBY, *The Medieval Kingdoms of Nubia*, pp. 14–30; ZACHAROPOULOU, *Νουβία και Βυζάντιο*, pp. 40–113.

5 John of Ephesus, *Ecclesiastical History*, in VANTINI, *Oriental Sources*, pp. 6–26. See also KIRWAN, "A Contemporary Account of the Conversion of the Sudan to Christianity"; Id., "The Birth of Christian Nubia," pp. 127–132; ZACHAROPOULOU, "Justinian and Theodora."

6 ADAMS, *Meinarti I*, pp. 86–89, 102; EDWARDS, *The Nubian Past*, pp. 216–219; JAKOBIELSKI, *Faras III*, pp. 17–24; KIRWAN, "The Birth of Christian Nubia," pp. 121–127; MARTENS-CZARNECKA, "The Christian Nubia and the Arabs," p. 249; OBLEUSKI, *The Rise of Nobadia*, pp. 173–174, 176–177; WELSBY, *The Medieval Kingdoms of Nubia*, pp. 31–67; ZACHAROPOULOU, "Η χριστιανική διείσδυση στη Νοβατία πριν τον επίσημο εκχριστιανισμό της τον 6ο αιώνα," pp. 316–332.

7 ADAMS, *Nubia*, p. 444; Id., "Medieval Nubia," p. 29; KEA, "The Mediterranean and Africa," p. 436.

8 ŻURAWSKI, "Nubian Mortuary Complex of the Christian Period," pp. 171–172.

9 FRENK, "Nubia as an Outpost of Byzantine Cultural Influence"; GODLEWSKI, "Nubia, Egypt, and Byzantium," pp. 168–170; HÄGG, "Some Remarks on the Use of Greek in Nubia," pp. 104–105; ŁAJTAR, "Old Nubian Texts from Gebel Adda," p. 198; MARTENS-CZARNECKA "Iconography of Jesus Christ in Nubian Painting," pp. 242–248; Id., "The Christian Nubia and the Arabs," pp. 252–253; TÖRÖK, "Money, Economy and Administration in Christian Nubia," pp. 302–309; WOŹNIAK, "L'influence byzantine dans l'art nubien"; Id., "Rayonnement de Byzance," pp. 15–16.

10 ADAMS, *Nubia*, p. 422; HENDRICKX, *Official Documents*, pp. 67–68; KIRWAN, "Prelude to Nubian Christianity," pp. 123–124; LETSIOS, *Βυζάντιο και Ερυθρά Θάλασσα*, pp. 191–200, 217–227, 328; WELSBY, *The Medieval Kingdoms of Nubia*, pp. 15, 18–19; ZACHAROPOULOU, *Νουβία*

pire's safety on its southern borders in Egypt and its economic interests in the trade with the Red Sea and African inland.¹¹ Concurrently, by adopting Christianity the new rulers of the Middle Nile Valley gained considerable benefits.¹² First of all, they assured their ascendancy over other tribal leaders in a struggle for dominance in the political vacuum left by Meroe's collapse.¹³ It was obvious that this religion was a warranty for their bonds with the mighty Byzantine Empire. At the same time, through its Christianisation Nubia rose to the forefront of that period as a force to be acknowledged in the eyes of the Christian world.¹⁴

After their evangelisation, Nubian states developed their political ideology and organised their administration by adopting the Byzantine model, creating an Afro-Byzantine model. According to what Medieval Arab historians wrote, Nubians followed the customs of the Rum, that is, of the Byzantines.¹⁵ Researching on the institutions of the Christian kingdoms of Nubia, we observe that the focal point

και Βυζάντιο, pp. 40–46; Id., “The Emergence of the State of Nobadia and the Byzantine Policy,” pp. 237–243; Id., “Ο Νοβάτης «βασιλίσκος» Σιλκώ και οι σχέσεις του με το Βυζάντιο.”

- 11 PROCOPIOUS, *History of the Wars*, 1. XIX. 33. See also CHRISTIDES, “Hagiography in the Service of History,” pp. 136–138; KARAYANNOPOULOS, *Ιστορία του Βυζαντινού*, p. 399; LETSIOS, *Βυζάντιο και Ερυθρά Θάλασσα*, pp. 335–346; TÖRÖK, comments in *FHN III*, p. 1190; TRIGGER, *History and Settlement in Lower Nubia*, p. 144; ZACHAROPOULOU, *Πρώμη Βυζαντινή Αυτοκρατορία και Βασίλειο του Αξούμ*, pp. 13–22, 46–63, 85–90, 98–107; Id., *Νουβία και Βυζάντιο*, pp. 66–69. Id., “The Emergence of the State of Nobadia and the Byzantine Policy,” pp. 233–237.
- 12 ADAMS, *Nubia*, pp. 443–445; DRZEWIECKI, *Mighty Kingdoms and Their Forts*, pp. 62, 75–78; OBLUSKI, “The Formation of the Nobadian State,” pp. 607–617; ZACHAROPOULOU, *Νουβία και Βυζάντιο*, pp. 69–70.
- 13 As Artur Obluski has shown regarding the formation of the Nobadian state, in a chiefdom society – as the post-Meroitic was – one way of legitimizing a leader was his possession of valuable objects – in Nubia's case coming from the Byzantine Empire – and his ability to use them in order to buy off the loyalty of other tribal leaders (OBLUSKI, “The Formation of the Nobadian State,” pp. 607–609). See also DIJKSTRA, “Religious Encounters on the Southern Egyptian Frontier,” p. 55; FULLER, “Pharaonic or Sudanic?” pp. 169–184; EDWARDS, “Power and the State in the Middle Nile”; Id., “Meroe and the Sudanic Kingdoms,” pp. 190–193; Id., “Meroe in the Savannah,” pp. 317–318; For theories about the consolidation of ruling elites in general, see KRISTIANSEN, “Chiefdoms,” pp. 16–43; WELSBY, *The Medieval Kingdoms of Nubia*, p. 21.
- 14 In respect of this, let's see what John of Deacon (VANTINI, *Oriental Sources*, pp. 44–45) wrote in the middle of the 8th century about Cyriacus, the king of Makuria: “(Cyriacus) was the orthodox Ethiopian king of Al-Mukurrah; and he was entitled the Great King upon whom the crown descended from Heaven and he governed as far as the southern extremities of the Earth for he is the Greek king, fourth of the Earth; and none of the other kingdoms stands up against him.” See also GODLEWSKI, “Nubia, Egypt, and Byzantium,” pp. 168–169; EDWARDS, “The Archaeology of Sudan and Nubia,” p. 221; KEA, “The Mediterranean and Africa,” pp. 436–439; TSAKOS, “On Place Names Used by Nubians,” pp. 237–238; ŻURAWSKI, “Banganarti and Selib,” pp. 384–387.
- 15 Thus, e.g., al-Istakhri (VANTINI, *Oriental Sources*, p. 111) says: “Only a few branches of the Blacks who dwell along the borders of the aforesaid empires [i.e., the Byzantine and the Moslem empires] possess some religious beliefs, moral and political institutions similar to [those of] the above mentioned empires. Such are the Nubians (*an-Nūba*) and the Ethiopians (*Ḥabasha*) because they are Christians and follow the customs of the Rūm. Before Islam, those peoples had some links with the empire of the Rūm because they were neighbours.” Al-Umari (VANTINI, *Oriental Sources*, p. 516) also says: “Misr is enclosed within four frontiers, i.e., the southern frontier beginning from the Red Sea at Aydhāb, passes through the country of the Badariba and the Rum of Nubia.” In this Giovanni Ruffini can see a pattern in which Muslims saw Nubia and thought of Byzantium (RUFFINI, *Medieval Nubia*, p. 72). See also

of their organisation was royal power, which was concentrated on the king's image, persona, and role. In this respect, official royal iconography, as depicted in wall paintings of Nubian churches, gives us a good insight into Nubia's political ideology.¹⁶

First of all, in order to manifest how powerful their authority was, Nubian kings, through their representations in Byzantine attire, highlighted the connection between themselves and their Byzantine counterparts. Kings are depicted wearing Byzantine-style crowns like the *kamelaukion*, topped with a cross and with the characteristic *prependulia*, finely decorated robes of honour in the type of *chlamys* decorated with *tablion*, and golden pendants and red shoes.¹⁷ In their hands, kings hold a sceptre and other insignia of royal power. Probably, they had a clear knowledge of the magnificence of Byzantine Emperor and his court either by the Nubian delegations that visited Constantinople¹⁸ or by effigies of Byzantine kings sent as royal gifts to Old Dongola, and by their portraits on coins and miniatures in Byzantine codices used in churches.¹⁹

Moreover, they organised their court on the very elaborate Byzantine pattern. Research on documents from Nubia reveals a plethora of Greek titles and offices such as *eparchos*, *nauarchos*, *exarchos*, *chartularios*, *domestikos*, *triklinarios*, *notarios*, *meizon*, *meizoteros*, *protomeizoteros*, *illustris*, and so on.²⁰ This nomenclature reflects a well-organised administration based on a well-developed bureaucracy controlled by the king and enhancing his authority.²¹

GODLEWSKI, *Dongola*, pp. 47, 64–67; MARTENS-CZARNECKA, "The Christian Nubia and the Arabs," p. 250.

- 16 With regard to this, see INNEMÉE, "Observations on the System of Nubian Church Decoration"; JAKOBIELSKI, *Faras III*; MARTENS-CZARNECKA, "Some Remarks on Iconography of Rulers and Archangels"; WOŹNIAK, "The Chronology of the Eastern Chapels in the Upper Church at Banganarti," pp. 629–646; ZIELIŃSKA, "The Iconography of Power," pp. 943–949; ŻURAWSKI, "The Southern Dongola Reach Survey Project," p. 245.
- 17 GODLEWSKI, "Nubia, Egypt, and Byzantium," pp. 169–170; INNEMÉE, "Observations on the System of Nubian Church Decoration," pp. 283–285; MARTENS-CZARNECKA, "Some Remarks on Iconography of Rulers and Archangels," pp. 94–98; WOŹNIAK, "L'influence Byzantine dans l'art Nubien," pp. 86–87; Id., "Rayonnement de Byzance," pp. 4–18; Id., "Royal Iconography," pp. 929–941; Id., "The Chronology of the Eastern Chapels in the Upper Church at Banganarti," 632–635; ZIELIŃSKA, "Painted Decoration of the Central Hall," pp. 32–33, figs. 2–13; ŻURAWSKI, "Medieval Nubian Regalia," p. 226; Id., "Miracles of Banganarti," p. 22.
- 18 Eusebius, *Vita Constantini* 4.7 in EIDE, HÄGG, PIERCE & TÖRÖK, *Fontes Historiae Nubiorum*, p. 1079–1081; John of Ephesus, *Ecclesiastical History*, in VANTINI, *Oriental Sources*, p. 14, 27–28; VANTINI, *Christianity in the Sudan*, pp. 40–41, 165–168; HENDRICKX, "Un roi africain à Constantinople en 1203"; ROSTKOWSKA, "The Visit of a Nubian King to Constantinople."
- 19 GODLEWSKI, "Nubia, Egypt, and Byzantium," p. 177; Id., "Christian Nubia, Studies 1996–2000," p. 1047; ŻURAWSKI, "Nubian Mortuary Complex of the Christian Period," p. 173n5; "The Anastasis Scene," pp. 168–169, 176–179.
- 20 HÄGG, "Titles and Honorific Epithets in Nubian Greek Texts"; HENDRICKX, "The Nubian and Blemmyan Rulers and Their States"; Id., "Byzantine Profane Titles, Epithets and Symbols"; DEPTUŁA "Inscriptions from Saint Menas' Church in Selib," pp. 127–131; ŁAJTAR, "The Mystery of Timikleos Solved!"; MARTENS-CZARNECKA, "Some Remarks on Iconography of Rulers and Archangels," p. 93; WELSBY, *The Medieval Kingdoms of Nubia*, pp. 95–96.
- 21 On this subject, see RUFFINI, "Documentary Evidence and the Production of Power."

During the first phases of the Nubian states' organisation, the adoption of these titles was probably a necessity derived from the lack of a proper terminology, on one hand, and from the advantage in using the Greek language for communication with Mediterranean Christianity, on the other. But the ongoing use of Greek titles even after Old Nubian literacy was fully developed²² may convey a symbolic significance in the Nubian context. Given that Greek was the language of the Bible and of Nubia's official evangelisation, thus the primary vehicle of God's word, it may have been considered in Nubia as a sacred language²³ that attributed a kind of sanctity to an office, to a title bearer or to its user. Therefore, the use of Greek could work both as a constant reminder of Nubia's bonds with the Byzantine Empire and at the same time used as a spiritual devotional tool. Moreover, the Greek alphabet seems to resonate with symbolic significance. In this respect, it is widely accepted among scholars who study African cultures that specific patterns were known to have had spiritual significance in African art. Abstract designs that were considered as bearing mystic powers often reappeared in many forms including ceremonial scarring and tattooing.²⁴ This is probably the case of a mummified Christian woman found in Nubia. She lived during the 7th–8th century and the monogram of Archangel Michael was tattooed on her thigh.²⁵ Written words can be considered as a kind of pattern and their apotropaic use is well attested on texts and graffiti in Nubia.²⁶

The most essential political idea that the Nubians shared with the Byzantines is the concept of theocracy, in which *sacerdotium* and *regnum* are closely tied to one another.²⁷ The Byzantines regarded

22 New titles such as *διάκονος μέγας* and *πρεσβύτερος μέγας*, were coined on original Byzantine terms under the influence of Old Nubian, as late as in the 11th century at least (see BROWNE, *Old Nubian Texts from Qasr Ibrim III*, no. 58, ii, l. 1; ŁAJTAR & OCHAŁA, "Ase," pp. 241–243). In addition, in inscriptions from Nubia, texts in Greek are very often written side by side with the ones in Old Nubian, or they are a mixture of both languages. See BROWNE, "Old Nubian Philology"; JAKOBIELSKI, "Old Dongola Kom H"; ŁAJTAR & VAN DER VLIET, "A View from a Hill," p. 160; ŁAJTAR, "Dongola 2010" p. 286; Id., "Archangel Raphael in Inscriptions," p. 261; Id., "The Greek of Late Christian inscriptions from Nubia." For the status of Greek in Nubia, see HÄGG, "Uses of Greek in the Nubian Kingdoms"; OCHAŁA, "Multilingualism in Christian Nubia," pp. 26–34; SHINNIE, "Multilingualism," pp. 45–46; TSAKOS, "The Use and Role of the Greek Language in Christian Nubia"; Id., "Religious Literacy in Greek from the Christian Monastery at Qasr el Wizz."

23 OCHAŁA, "Multilingualism in Christian Nubia," p. 43; TSAKOS, "On Place Names Used by Nubians," pp. 234–236.

24 DAVIDSON, *African Kingdoms*, p. 154.

25 See VANDENBEUSCH & ANTOINE, "Under Saint Michael's Protection."

26 ŁAJTAR & VAN DER VLIET, "An Inscribed Tomb Chamber in Ukma-West"; Id., *Empowering the Dead in Christian Nubia*, passim; TSAKOS, "The Liber Institutionis Michaelis in Medieval Nubia," p. 59; Id., "Miscellanea Epigraphica Nubica V," pp. 261–263 and fn. 17; VANDENBEUSCH, "Under Saint Michael's Protection."

27 For a definition of theocracy, see ZAKAI, "Theocracy," pp. 342–343; WASKEY, "The Political Theory of Theocracy," pp. 116–129. For "theocracy" in Nubia see Al-Qazwini in VANTINI, *Oriental Sources*, p. 383–384; Al-Bakuwi in VANTINI, *Oriental Sources*, p. 565; ŻURAWSKI, "Miracles of Baganarti," p. 22; Id., "Filling in the Gaps," p. 94. For theocracy in Byzantium,

their empire as an earthly reflection of the heavenly kingdom.²⁸ And according to the theory put forward by Eusebius, the authority of the emperor was bestowed upon him by God.²⁹ This theocratic political ideology of Byzantium seems to have easily fitted to the concept of divine/sacred kingship that was so widely spread throughout Africa.³⁰

According to this tradition, a king is conceived as the most sacred person and, after his inauguration, a God on earth. He rules as an embodiment of divine forces and he is the source of the law in society, the one who connects the world of the living with the one of the spirits and ancestors, hence he secures harmony between the terrestrial and spiritual worlds as well as order in society. In a mystical and supernatural way, a king, through his presence, ensures society's power and prosperity. Moreover, a king's robustness and strength is connected with the power of the state. Thus, in many instances in the African tradition, when a king was getting physically weak, measures like a regicide and his ensuing replacement had to be taken in order to prevent the weakening of the state.³¹

In Nubia, the notion of the king as a providential ruler and a God living on earth easily transformed into a king who ruled by the providence of God, who also superintended the observance of Christian law and had undertaken as his main duty the Christians' protection in his realm.

see GEANAKOPOLOS, "Church and State in the Byzantine Empire," pp. 381–403; GLYKATZI-AHRWEILER, *L'idéologie politique de l'empire byzantin*, pp. 148–168; Id., *Γιατί το Βυζάντιο*, pp. 145–149; RUNCIMAN, *The Byzantine Theocracy*.

28 GLYKATZI-AHRWEILER, *L'idéologie politique de l'empire byzantin*, p. 159.

29 BAYNES, *Byzantine Studies and Other Essays*, pp. 53–59, 168–171; GLYKATZI-AHRWEILER, *L'idéologie politique de l'empire byzantin*, pp. 24, 145, 164, 166; Id., *Γιατί το Βυζάντιο*, p. 147; HENDRICKX, "Byzantium and Its Meaning for Africa," pp. 209–211.

30 On the debate over the terms "divine" or "sacred" kingship in Africa, see GILBERT, "The Sacralized Body of the Akwapim King," pp. 171–174; GRAEBER, "The Divine Kingship of the Shilluk," pp. 2–13; DE HEUSCH, "Forms of Sacralized Power in Africa," pp. 25–37; RIAD, "The Divine Kingship of the Shilluk and Its Origin" pp. 156–164; RICHARDS "Keeping the King Divine," pp. 23–35; VAUGHAN, "Divine Kings," pp. 383–401 (with reference to the Bemba). On the divine/sacred kingship in Africa, see also ARENS, "The Divine Kingship of the Shilluk"; CLAESSEN, "Sacred Kingship," pp. 3–48 (with reference to the cases of West African Dahomey, East African Buganda, the north Kongo kingdom of Tio, the central Kongo kingdom of Kuba, West African Benin, the Jukun in the west Sahel, the Nilotic kingdom of the Shilluk, and Interlacustrine Bunyoro); ENKAMIT, *Divine Kingship of Asante*, pp. 28–30, 80–111; EVANS-PRITCHARD, "The Divine kingship of the Shilluk of the Nilotic Sudan"; LIENHARDT, "The Shilluk of the Upper Nile"; LLOYD, "Sacred Kingship and Government among the Yoruba," pp. 221–237; MEYEROWITZ, *The Divine Kingship in Ghana and Ancient Egypt*.

31 CLAESSEN, "Sacred Kingship," pp. 4, 23–24, 31–33; EVANS-PRITCHARD, "The Divine Kingship of the Shilluk of the Nilotic Sudan," pp. 413–419; GILBERT, "The Sacralized Body of the Akwapim King," pp. 171–174, 183–186; GRAEBER, "The Divine Kingship of the Shilluk," p. 3; RIAD, "The Divine Kingship of the Shilluk and its Origin," pp. 156–164; SCHNEPEL, "Continuity despite and through Death," pp. 42–50; SIMONSE, "Tragedy, Ritual and Power in Nilotic Regicide," pp. 67–100; YOUNG, "The Divine Kingship of the Jukun," pp. 135–152.

One of the remarkable features of art in African cultures is its attempt “to give form to an abstraction”³² and thus to visualise complex ideas through simplified imagery. An example of this is the depiction of the Holy Trinity as the figure of Christ in a threefold identical image, which is a figurative rendering of this abstract Christian dogma.³³ Furthermore, the theocratic concept of a ruler by divine right is pictured by the Nubian kings’ representations, almost in every instance, under the protection of the Holy Trinity, Christ, the Virgin, and archangels.³⁴ Therefore, protection scenes aimed to illustrate that the king’s authority was given by God.³⁵ Through the king, his subjects were also blessed and protected. The representations of a king under protection is known from Byzantium,³⁶ and in Nubia it became a standard iconographic depiction within churches, which is something unique in the Christian world.³⁷ In protection scenes, traditional African beliefs interwoven with the Christian dogma can be traced. That is, for example, the archangels’ high status as protectors in the Nubian Church, which seems to be associated with traditional beliefs in spirits and ancestors.³⁸

The king’s inclusion in church iconography probably has to do with the role of churches as the gathering places of local congregations.³⁹ People gathered in churches to worship God and pray for

- 32 DAVIDSON, *African Kingdoms*, pp. 145–146. See also FINNESTAD, “Images as Messengers of Coptic Identity,” pp. 91, 98–100, 104–107; MAKOWSKI, “The Holy Trinity in Nubian Art,” p. 308; ŻURAWSKI, “The Anastasis Scene,” p. 175.
- 33 MAKOWSKI, “The Holy Trinity in Nubian Art”; MARTENS-CZARNECKA, “Nubian Wall Painting,” p. 266; Id., “Iconography of Jesus Christ in Nubian Painting,” pp. 243, 251–252, figs. 12, 15, 16; WELSBY, *The Medieval Kingdoms of Nubia*, pp. 229–230; WOŹNIAK, “L’influence byzantine dans l’art nubien,” p. 89; ZIELIŃSKA, “Painted Decoration of the Central Hall,” figs. 2–7, p. 28; figs. 2–12, p. 31.
- 34 For protection-scenes in Nubian churches’ iconographical program, see JAKOBIELSKI, “Nubian Scenes of Protection from Faras,” pp. 44–50; INNEMÉE, “Observations on the System of Nubian Church Decoration,” pp. 282–283; ŁAPTAŚ, “Banganarti 2003,” pp. 244–252; MARTENS-CZARNECKA, “Nubian Wall Painting,” pp. 266–267; Id., “Late Christian Painting in Nubia,” p. 308; Id., “Some Remarks on Iconography of Rulers and Archangels,” pp. 92–107; WOŹNIAK, “L’influence byzantine dans l’art nubien,” pp. 85–89; Id., “Rayonnement de Byzance,” pp. 7–10, figs. 1–3; ZIELIŃSKA, “The Iconography of Power,” pp. 943–949; ŻURAWSKI, “Survey and Excavations between Old Dongola and ez-Zuma,” pp. 76–78; ŻURAWSKI et al., “Banganarti and Selib,” p. 325.
- 35 GLYKATZI-AHRWEILER, *L’idéologie politique de l’empire byzantin*, p. 159; INNEMÉE, “Observations on the System of Nubian Church Decoration,” pp. 282–283; MARTENS-CZARNECKA, “Some Remarks on Iconography of Rulers and Archangels,” p. 93; TALBOT-RICE, *Everyday Life in Byzantium*, pp. 35–36; WOŹNIAK, “L’influence byzantine dans l’art nubien,” p. 89; ŻURAWSKI, “Medieval Nubian Regalia,” p. 224.
- 36 PAPAMASTORAKIS, “Orb of the Earth,” pp. 97, fig. 8; pp. 104–105, figs. 23, 24; WOŹNIAK, “L’influence byzantine dans l’art nubien,” pp. 88–89.
- 37 JAKOBIELSKI, “Nubian Scenes of Protection from Faras,” p. 44.
- 38 GODLEWSKI, “Christian Nubia – after the Nubian Campaign,” p. 272; INNEMÉE, “Observations on the System of Nubian Church Decoration,” pp. 280–281; ŁAPTAŚ, “Archangels as Protectors and Guardians in Nubian Paintings”; Id., “The Archangel Raphael as Protector, Demon Tamer, Guide and Healer”; VAN GERVEN OEI et al. (eds.), *The Old Nubian Texts from Attiri*, pp. 15–20.
- 39 KAPLAN, *Pourquoi Byzance?*, p. 144; cf. MARTENS-CZARNECKA, “Some Remarks on Iconography of Rulers and Archangels,” p. 93.

welfare in this life and salvation in the afterlife. In addition, churches have been excavated throughout Nubia, in almost every settlement.⁴⁰ Therefore, they were very convenient public spaces for a king to be visible to all his subjects even in the regions of his realm where his physical appearance was practically not feasible. Moreover, through his symbolic presence, the king could not only confirm the power of his authority but also accomplish his traditional role as a sacred king whose presence was connected with fertility of the land and prosperity of the population in his realm.⁴¹ The traditional practice of regicide was transformed under Christian influence as well. As Włodzimierz Godlewski has suggested, in the 11th century, due to a wave of hunger caused by a low Nile, King Solomon was sent to a monastery after a short rule.⁴²

From the 9th or the 10th century onwards the effigies of a king under protection begin to be represented in the apse of the sanctuary, the holiest place within an Eastern Christian church.⁴³ It seems to be a kind of symbolic illustration of the title of archpriest attributed to the Byzantine emperor⁴⁴ and probably acquired by his Nubian counterpart.⁴⁵ This new feature in Nubian royal iconography

40 EDWARDS (*The Nubian Past*, p. 241) mentions that 150 churches have been located only in the area between the first and third Nile cataract. For a full list of the churches of Nobadia, see ADAMS, "Architectural Evolution of the Nubian Church," pp. 126–38. Portraits of kings, of course, are not found in every Nubian church.

41 For kings' association with fertility in African traditions, see CLAESSEN, "Sacred Kingship," pp. 4, 14–15, 19, 31–38; EVANS-PRITCHARD, "The Divine Kingship of the Shilluk of the Nilotic Sudan," p. 414; GORDON, "(Dis)embodying Sovereignty," pp. 50; GRAEBER, "The Divine Kingship of the Shilluk," p. 3; VAUGHAN, "Divine Kings," p. 397. For Christian Nubians' attachment to their old African tradition, see ADAMS, *Nubia*, p. 480; EDWARDS, *The Nubian Past*, p. 127; LAJTAR, "A Greek Hymn to the Virgin," pp. 406–407; MARTENS-CZARNECKA, "A Scene of a Ritual Dance"; OBLUSKI, "Nubia and the Late Antique Greek-Roman World" SCANLON, "Excavations at Qasr el-Wizz," p. 48.

42 GODLEWSKI, "Archbishop Georgius of Dongola," pp. 669–671. For Solomon, see in accounts written by Severus (VANTINI, *Oriental Sources*, p. 215), Abu Makarrem (*ibid.*, pp. 331–332), and al-Furat (*ibid.*, pp. 393–394).

43 GODLEWSKI, "Bishops and Kings," pp. 267–271; *Id.*, "Archbishop Georgius of Dongola," pp. 666–667; JAKOBIELSKI, "Tentative d'identification de certaines peintures de Faras," pp. 65–71; INNEMÉE, "Observations on the System of Nubian Church Decoration," p. 282; MARTENS-CZARNECKA, "Some Remarks on Iconography of Rulers and Archangels," pp. 94–107; WOŹNIAK, "L'influence byzantine dans l'art nubien," pp. 86–88; *Id.*, "Rayonnement de Byzance," pp. 6–13; ZIELIŃSKA, "The Iconography of Power," pp. 943–946; ŻURAWSKI, "Survey and Excavations between Old Dongola and ez-Zuma," pp. 76–78; *Id.*, "The Southern Dongola Reach Survey Project, 2002," pp. 245–246.

44 DAGRON, *Emperor and Priest*, pp. 31–32, 127–181, 248–318; GEANAKOPOLOS, "Church and State in the Byzantine Empire," pp. 391–392; ΔΡΑΚΟΠΟΥΛΟΣ, *Μεσαιώνας Ελληνικός και Δυτικός*, p. 52; ΟΙΚΟΝΟΜΙΔΗΣ, "Το νέο κράτος της μέσης βυζαντινής περιόδου," pp. 171–174.

45 Such an appropriation by Nubian kings might be traced in the chronicle of OTTO, BISHOP OF FREISING (*Otonis Episcopi Frisingensis Chronica sive Historia de Duabus Civitatibus* [vii, 33]), which mentions a Christian leader who was both a priest and a king at the same time. From his remote kingdom, situated beyond the Islamic countries, he would attack them from the rear. In the 13th century in *Historia Damiatana* Oliver of Paderborn has recorded a prophecy about the Nubians. According to this prophecy, a Nubian king would seize Islam's holy lands in Hejaz (OLIVER SCHOLASTICUS, *Opera*, I. *Historia Damiatana*; II, *Epistolae*). In such hearsay and prophecies the origins of the legendary figure of Prester John can be found. For Prester John, see in DORESSE, *L'empire du prêtre Jean*; JONES & MONROE, *A History of Ethiopia*, pp. 59–63; KAPLAN, *The Rise of the Black Magus in Western Art*, pp. 43–62; KURT, "The Search

could be a kind of encroachment on clerical privileges as well as a proclamation of the king's dominance over the religious domain. It was the period when the kingdom of Makuria enjoyed its economic, political, and cultural heyday. We know that Georgios I, during his visit to Baghdad, won the attention as well as admiration of the Christian population.⁴⁶ And it was the very same Georgios whose representation was firstly illustrated in the Faras cathedral. His successor is probably the ruler who is first depicted in the apse composition under the Virgin's protection.⁴⁷ This king's representation may visualise Justinian's principle of one state, one Church, one law, all concentrated on the king's person.⁴⁸

In Nubia, just as in the Byzantine Empire, the Church and the State seem to be the two main institutions upon which the spiritual and political life of the Christian kingdoms were based, over the centuries of their history. For instance, we find settlements from that period developing around a church, which probably functioned not only as a religious but as an administrative centre as well.⁴⁹ Moreover, in texts found in Qasr Ibrim, we see references to the participation of the Church in economic issues of the state, since priests served either as scribes and warrantors or as receivers of assets.⁵⁰ Besides, Nubian bishops hold a prominent place among the depicted faces in wall paintings and, furthermore, the wealth of the churches is a clear indication of their high standing in Nubian society.⁵¹ But,

for Prester John," pp. 297–320; SALVADORE, "The Ethiopian Age of Exploration," pp. 593–627; SEIGNOBOS, "L'autre Éthiopie: La Nubie et la croisade (XII^e–XIV^e siècle)," pp. 49–69; ZACHAROPOULOU, "The Black Saint Maurice of Magdeburg and the African Christian Kingdoms in Nubia and Ethiopia in the 13th century," pp. 90–93.

46 Michael the Syrian wrote in his Chronicle regarding the visit of the Nubian Prince Georqi(us) to Baghdad in 835 CE: "When the prince arrived at Callinice (Syria) the emir of Jezirah came to meet him. The Tayaye and the Christians accompanied him to see the unprecedented marvel which had happened in their country [...]. Georqi(us) advanced towards the king (Al-Mutasim) who took him by the hand and made him sit before him. [...] He received Georqi(us) very well and gave him rich presents of gold and silver." In VANTINI, *Oriental Sources*, pp. 316–319. See also al-Aswani's account by Maqrizi in VANTINI, *Oriental Sources*, pp. 644–647.

47 GODLEWSKI, "Bishops and Kings," pp. 265–269; JAKOBIELSKI, "Tentative d'identification de certaines peintures de Faras," pp. 65–66; INNEMÉE, "Observations on the System of Nubian Church Decoration," p. 282; MARTENS-CZARNECKA, "Some Remarks on Iconography of Rulers and Archangels," p. 94; ZIELIŃSKA, "The Painted Decoration of the Church at Sonqi Tino," pp. 943–944.

48 EVANS, *The Age of Justinian*, pp. 60–61; MOSS, "The History of the Byzantine Empire," p. 7; RUNCIMAN, *The Byzantine Theocracy*, pp. 45–46.

49 ADAMS, "Medieval Nubia, Another Golden Age," p. 33; DEPTUŁA "Inscriptions from Saint Menas' Church in Selib," pp. 131–134; EDWARDS, *The Nubian Past*, p. 241; JAKOBIELSKI, *Faras III*, pp. 15–16, 85; MARTENS-CZARNECKA, "Wall Paintings Discovered in Dongola," pp. 281–282; RUFFINI, "Documentary Evidence and the Production of Power," p. 15; TÖRÖK, "Money, Economy and Administration in Christian Nubia," pp. 298–300; TRIGGER, *History and Settlement in Lower Nubia*, p. 149; TSAKOS, "On Place Names Used by Nubians," p. 234.

50 ŁAJTAR, "Dongola 2010"; OCHALA, "Multilingualism in Christian Nubia," p. 32; TSAKOS, "On Place Names Used by Nubians," p. 234.

51 GODLEWSKI, "Bishops and Kings," pp. 265–79; Id., "Archbishop Georgius of Dongola"; Id., *Dongola*, pp. 52, 57; INNEMÉE, "Monks and Bishops in Old Dongola"; ZIELIŃSKA, "The Painted Decoration of the Church at Sonqi Tino," pp. 595–596.

ultimately, the Church was under the royal authority, and, as Nubian texts indicate, the kings of Nubia, just as the Byzantine kings, had control over ecclesiastical affairs. Moreover, kings nominated the bishops who were subsequently approved by the patriarch of Alexandria.⁵²

However, Nubian kings never proceeded to claim autonomy over their Church and release it from its dependency on the Patriarchate of Alexandria. Why did they preserve, throughout their history, the tradition that required the appointment of their metropolitan to depend on Egypt and why did not they declare the autonomy of the Nubian Church? Only tentative answers can be provided to this question. The reason might be that, through these contacts, Nubians remained connected with the rest of the Christian world wherein they could seek inspiration and the powers of their renaissance. On the other hand, the Christians outside Nubia, especially these of Egypt, Syria, and Ethiopia, saw in the face of a Nubian king the leader who was able to offer his protection to Christian people. Nubian kings willingly undertook this responsibility whenever they intervened in Egypt, in defence of the persecuted local Church or when they mediated with the patriarch in order to restore his contacts with Ethiopia.⁵³

To conclude with the relations between Church and state in Nubia, the fact remains that the Nubian Church not only developed under the royal auspices, but existed by virtue of the royal protection. Without this protection Christianity fell into decline and eventually disappeared completely. This development accelerated after a Muslim leader's ascension to the throne of Dongola.⁵⁴ This is very different from what happened in the rest of the Eastern Christian world, where the Church outlived the state.

As we have already noticed, royal authority was placed in the centre of Nubia's theocratic system. Nubian documents evidence that the authorities of officials and dignitaries derived from and were sanctified by their connection with kings.⁵⁵ The representation of a Nubian king among apostles, as we can see from Faras, Dongola,

52 PLUMLEY, "Qasr Ibrim 1974," p. 7. For example, we do find a reference in John the Deacon, describing how Michael, a patriarch of Copts in Alexandria, was forced to finally accept the substitution of a Nubian archbishop, although he did not agree with it, after the archbishop's conflict with the Nubian king. See VANTINI, *Oriental Sources*, pp. 40–43; In addition, we know several cases where a nominee was the son of a dead king, who was denied access to the throne due to matrilineal system of succession that is attested in Makuria a number of times after the 11th century. See the account by Severus in VANTINI, *Oriental Sources*, p. 217.

53 See accounts by John the Deacon in VANTINI, *Oriental Sources*, pp. 43–44; Severus in VANTINI, *Oriental Sources*, pp. 201–204, 205–207; Abu Makarrem in VANTINI, *Oriental Sources*, pp. 329–330; al-Makin in VANTINI, *Oriental Sources*, pp. 374–375.

54 ADAMS, *Nubia*, pp. 508, 522–31; WELSBY, *The Medieval Kingdoms of Nubia*, pp. 242–255; ZACHAROPOULOU, *Νουβία και Βυζάντιο*, pp. 222–232.

55 As RUFFINI has very convincingly suggested in "Documentary Evidence and the Production of Power in Medieval Nubia."

or Banganarti,⁵⁶ might be a pictorial communication of this idea. This is very similar to the picture of Byzantine court that Emperor Constantine VII Porphyrogenitus described in his *De Cerimoniis Aulæ Byzantinæ*.⁵⁷ There the Byzantine emperor is presented among his dignitaries as Christ among the apostles.

In Nubia's theocratic system the divine origin of the royal authority is also underlined by the role preserved for the queen mother. She occupied the most important place among the Nubian dignitaries. The office of the mother of the king was presented in close connection with the Mother of Christ. In Nubian wall paintings, representations of the queen mother under the protection of God's Mother are depicted in the northern nave, that is in the part of a church which was kept for women.⁵⁸ The queen mother was also depicted being clad in Byzantine-style and Byzantinised crowns resembling the ones worn by Theotokos. As regards the queen mother role we can testify not only influences from Byzantium, but also elements of the traditional concept of African kingship,⁵⁹ in which her role is paramount, as she is the person who supports a king in his rule.⁶⁰ The tradition of ruling queens is well attested in Nubia during the Meroitic kingdom.⁶¹ In Christian Nubia the matrilineal succession gave the queen- other even greater political relevance.

In conclusion, it is not only memories from Byzantium that can be traced in Nubian political ideology throughout medieval Christian Nubian history. Overall, the Nubian states were formed as long as the new leaders who emerged from the ruins of the Meroitic state were determined to establish their authority by becoming Christian converts in interaction with the Byzantines. Therefore, they created a strong Christian kingdom modelled on the Byzantine Empire, which became a part of Eastern Christendom. In the political ideology that they promulgated among their subjects, elements from African and Byzantine culture were interwoven. This creative inter-

56 GODLEWSKI, "Archbishop Georgius of Dongola," pp. 671–672; ZIELIŃSKA, "The Iconography of Power," pp. 943–946; ŻURAWSKI, "Miracles of Banganarti," pp. 20–22; Id., "Nubian Mortuary Complex of the Christian Period," p. 181; ŻURAWSKI et al., "Banganarti and Selib," p. 325.

57 REISKE, *Constantini Porphyrogeniti Imperatoris, De Cerimoniis Aulæ Byzantinæ*, p. 638. See also GLYKATZI-AHRWEILER, *L'idéologie politique de l'empire byzantin*, p. 63.

58 GODLEWSKI, *Pachoras*, p. 71; Id., "Bishops and Kings," p. 266; INNEMÉE, "Observations on the System of Nubian Church Decoration," p. 285; WOŹNIAK, "L'influence byzantine dans l'art nubien," pp. 85–86; ZIELIŃSKA, "The Painted Decoration of the Church at Sonqi Tino," pp. 596–597; Id., "The Iconography of Power," p. 943 and fn. 4.

59 VAN GERVEN OEI, "A Dance for a Princess," pp. 117–135.

60 CLAESSEN, "Sacred Kingship," pp. 6–7, 21, 25, 28; ENKAMIT, *Divine Kingship of Asante*, passim, and see especially a conclusion on p. 290; FARRAR, "The Queenmother, Matriarchy, and the Question of Female Political Authority"; GRAEBER, "The Divine kingship of the Shilluk," pp. 16–18; KAPLAN, "Iyoba," pp. 73–102; LIENHARDT, "Nilotic Kings and Their Mothers' Kin," pp. 29–42; MEYEROWITZ, *The Divine Kingship in Ghana and Ancient Egypt*, pp. 23–26.

61 KAHN, "The Queen Mother in the Kingdom of Kush," pp. 61–68; LOHWASSER "Queenship in Kush," pp. 61–76; MORKOT, "Kingship and Kinship in the Empire of Kush," pp. 211–213; TÖRÖK, "Kinship and Decorum," pp. 60–84.

action is evident in everyday life, in art and in the use of the Greek language by the indigenous population. Therefore, the ideological influences from Byzantium integrated into Nubia's indigenous background, forming thus a unique Afro-Byzantine society. This society was strong enough to safeguard its status as the sovereign state in the Middle Nile Valley. Studying its history we can acquire a comprehensive and insightful understanding of Eastern Christianity during Medieval times.

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The Nubian Frontier as a Refuge Area Warrior Society between c. 1200 and c. 1800 CE: A Comparison between Nubia and the Ottoman Balkans

Henriette Hafsaas¹

Introduction

The period from the Ayyubid invasion of Lower Nubia by Salah ad-Din's brother in 1172–1173 to Mohammed Ali's conquest of northern Sudan in 1820–1821 has been termed the *Feudal Age* by William Adams, the nestor of Nubian archaeology.² The characterizing feature of the Feudal Age was the disappearance of centralized government, and in its place “a growing spirit of military feudalism [...] manifested itself in the appearance of castles and military architecture, in the rise of increasingly independent local feudatories, and in dynastic quarrels within the ruling houses.”³ The rocky and isolated region of Batn el-Hajar has been considered as an area of refuge during these tumultuous times.⁴ For the people living in Nubia, this period was marked by the emergence of tribal societies. Some inaccessible tracts, like Batn el-Hajar, were also characterized by religious resilience where Christianity prevailed, although there was a religious shift from Christianity to Islam among their neighbors.

During the centuries of religious transition from Christianity to Islam in Nubia, the region spanning the stretch of the Nile between the First Cataract in Lower Nubia in the north and the Third Cataract in Upper Nubia in the south was a zone between opposing polities (Map 1). In accordance with David Edwards, Ali Osman,

1 Volda University College.

2 ADAMS, *Nubia*, pp. 510, 635.

3 *Ibid.*, p. 544.

4 *Ibid.*, p. 513.

Map 1. Nubia with sites mentioned in the text. Graphics by the author.



Table 1 Chronological phases in Nubia

Phase	Time-span
Transitional phase	c. 550-600
Early medieval phase	c. 600-850
Classic medieval phase	c. 850-1150
Late medieval phase	c. 1150-1400
Terminal medieval phase	c. 1400-1550
Ottoman occupation of northern Nubia	c. 1550-1800

and Intisar El-Zein, I see this region as a *Nubian frontier*.⁵ However, I will expand the timeframe of the Nubian frontier of the 2nd millennium CE by proposing that it began around 1200, when the stateless zone in northern Nubia was situated between the Muslim Ayyubid and thereafter Mamluk rulers of Egypt and the Christian kingdom of Makuria with its heartlands in the Dongola Reach between the Third and the Fourth Cataracts. I will also include the period from c. 1500 to c. 1800,⁶ when the Nubian frontier was placed between two Islamic empires – the Ottomans in the north and the Funj in the south. I understand this Nubian frontier as a zone between large and expanding states, although the frontier zone was never fully integrated into any of these states. Such a zone outside state administration has also been called a *tribal zone*.⁷ Anthropologists R. Brian Ferguson and Neil L. Whitehead consider tribalization, i.e., the genesis of new tribes, as the result of sociopolitical transformations caused by proximity to a state without being part of it.⁸ The terms *tribe* and *tribal* have been widely criticized for their pejorative connotations and for being colonial constructs.⁹ However, *tribe* is still a useful term for a form of decentralized political organization that often derives from contact with a socio-politically centralized society – usually a state.¹⁰ I will argue that tribalization occurred on the Nubian frontier during the 2nd millennium CE. Since the location on the frontier of a state is the constant variable in this form of tribalization, I will use the term *frontier* rather than *tribal zone*.¹¹ In fact, the land to the south of Egypt has been a frontier during many periods in the history of the complex relationship between Egypt and Sudan.¹²

In the study of the Nubian past, the period between c. 1200 and c. 1800 has received little attention from archaeologists and historians alike – due both to a lack of sources and to a greater interest in more monumental periods. In this article, I will attempt to amend this by applying the cross-cultural adaptation of a *refuge area warrior society*, which was first termed and employed by the anthropologist Christopher Boehm.¹³ I will discuss if the Nubian frontier is compatible with a refuge area warrior adaptation between c. 1200

5 EDWARDS & OSMAN, *Survey in the Mahas Region*, p. 19, and EDWARDS & EL-ZEIN, *Post-Medieval Settlement*, p. 173.

6 EDWARDS & EL-ZEIN, *Post-Medieval Settlement*, p. 173.

7 FERGUSON & WHITEHEAD, *The Violent Edge of Empire*, p. 3.

8 *Ibid.*, p. 3.

9 Jones, *The Archaeology of Ethnicity*, p. 52.

10 HAFSAAS-TSAKOS, *War on the Southern Frontier of the Emerging State of Ancient Egypt*, p. 166.

11 See also *ibid.*, p. 167.

12 E.g., EDWARDS & OSMAN, *Survey in the Mahas Region*, p. 5. See also HAFSAAS-TSAKOS, *War on the Southern Frontier of the Emerging State of Ancient Egypt*, p. 396, and Van der Vliet, *Contested Frontiers: Southern Egypt and Northern Nubia, AD 300–1500*.

13 BOEHM, *Mountain Refuge Area Adaptations*, pp. 24, 31, 35.

and c. 1800, and how the frontier situation affected processes of tribalization and the religious transition from Christianity to Islam. I focus on the developments on Sai Island, where the Medieval Sai Project¹⁴ has undertaken a survey that included post-medieval remains, but I also include the wider frontier zone by using available data to support the arguments in this comparative case study.

The emergence of the Nubian frontier of the 2nd millennium CE

Nubia was evangelized in the second half of the 6th century by missions from the Byzantine court in Constantinople, while the Coptic Church centered on the Patriarchate of Alexandria played an important role after the initial Christianization.¹⁵ The conversion to Christianity marks the beginning of the Medieval period in Nubia (Table 1). During the early medieval phase, Nubia was divided into three kingdoms: Nobadia (or Maris) in the north, Makuria (or Dotawo) in the middle, and Alodia (or Alwa) in the south (see Map 1). Makuria annexed the northern kingdom of Nobadia around the turn to the eighth century,¹⁶ and Makuria thus became a large state stretching from the First Cataract in the north to al-Abwāb about halfway between the Fifth and the Sixth Cataract in the south. In contrast to Christian Nubia, Egypt came under Muslim rulers in the early 7th century.¹⁷ Despite some confrontations, there appears to have been rather peaceful relations between the Christian kingdoms in Nubia in the south and the Muslim rulers of Egypt in the north under the Abbasid and Fatimid dynasties.¹⁸ The early and classical phases of the medieval period in Nubia have been meticulously studied, but the collapse of the Nubian kingdoms and the religious shift from Christianity to Islam have not been as thoroughly explored.

The last vizier of the Fatimid Dynasty in Egypt, Salah ad-Din, became the first sultan in the Ayyubid Dynasty when he seized power in Egypt in 1171.¹⁹ The largest group in the Fatimid army was formed by African footsoldiers known as the *Sūdān* (meaning “blacks” in Arabic).²⁰ The demolition and dispersal of the *Sūdān* was necessary in order for the Fatimid state to collapse.²¹ Already when Salah ad-Din was a vizier, he replaced the old multi-ethnic Fatimid army with an army of Turkmen and Kurdish horsemen.²² This was achieved by executing the commander of the *Sūdān*, which caused the black sol-

14 HAFSAAS-TSAKOS & TSAKOS, *First Glimpses into the Medieval Period on Sai Island*, pp. 78–79.

15 EDWARDS, *The Nubian Past*, pp. 216–217.

16 *Ibid.*, pp. 236–237.

17 HOLT & DALY, *A History of the Sudan*, p. 13.

18 EDWARDS, *The Nubian Past*, pp. 248–249, 214–215.

19 BAADJ, *Saladin, the Almohads and the Banū Ghāniya*, p. 102.

20 *Ibid.*, p. 103.

21 LEV, *Saladin in Egypt*, p. 82.

22 *Ibid.*, pp. 141, 150.

diers to revolt. Saladin crushed the rebellion, and he justified the violence toward them by alleging that the commander plotted against him.²³ Thousands of the Sūdān rebels sought refuge in Upper Egypt, where they probably found allies in Nubia. In 1172–1173, Nubians together with the remnants of the Sūdān regiments of the Fatimid army attacked Aswan in an attempt to invade Upper Egypt.²⁴

At this time, the southern borderlands of Egypt, including the southernmost town Aswan, the gold-bearing Wadi Allaqi, and the Red Sea port Aydhab, were controlled by the *Beni Kanz* – a semi-nomadic Muslim tribe of partly Arab descent.²⁵ This tribe was formed by a coalition between Arabs of Aswan and the Beja tribe of the Eastern Desert. The alliance started in the early 10th century and was cemented by large-scale intermarriage.²⁶ The leader of the Beni Kanz had been considered the *de facto* governor of Aswan since the 10th century under the title *Kanz ad-Dawla*,²⁷ and his subjects were often referred to as the *Kunuz* (singular *Kanzi*).²⁸ When the Nubians and the Sūdān foot-soldiers of the Fatimids attacked Aswan, the Kanz ad-Dawla asked Salah ad-Din for help. Salah ad-Din dispatched a contingent who assisted the Beni Kanz in expelling the intruders.²⁹ Thereafter, Salah ad-Din sent a major punitive campaign into Nubia in 1172–1173 under the leadership of his brother Tūrānshāh. The Ayyubids captured and occupied Qasr Ibrim – a fortified Nubian settlement on a defensible hill-top in the central part of Lower Nubia.³⁰ During the occupation, Qasr Ibrim was given as an *iqṭaʿ* (Arabic for land grant) to Ibrahim al-Kurdi and his contingent of Kurds. Al-Kurdi and his men used Qasr Ibrim as a base from where they launched attacks on the local population and raided the region.³¹ There are indications that they attacked Faras, the seat of the eparch of the northern province of Makuria and the former capital of the independent kingdom of Nobadia, and killed the bishop there.³² In 1175, al-Kurdi and some of his men drowned in an attempt to reach the island of Adindan. The remaining Kurds retreated to Egypt with their plunder, and Nubians resettled at Qasr Ibrim.³³

Around the time of the Ayyubid occupation of Qasr Ibrim, the large settlement of Meinarti, with a strategic position on an island straddling the northern end of the Second Cataract, was temporarily

23 Ibid., p. 84.

24 BAADJ, *Saladin, the Almohads and the Banū Ghāniya*, pp. 103–105.

25 Ibid., p. 92.

26 BAADJ, *The Political Context of the Egyptian Gold Crisis during the Reign of Saladin*, p. 126.

27 ADAMS, Nubia, pp. 524–525 and HOLT & DALY, *A History of the Sudan*, p. 17.

28 BAADJ, *The Political Context of the Egyptian Gold Crisis during the Reign of Saladin*, p. 126.

29 BAADJ, *Saladin, the Almohads and the Banū Ghāniya*, p. 105.

30 EDWARDS, *The Nubian Past*, p. 215.

31 BAADJ, *The Political Context of the Egyptian Gold Crisis during the Reign of Saladin*, pp. 131–132.

32 BAADJ, *Saladin, the Almohads and the Banū Ghāniya*, p. 105.

33 BAADJ, *The Political Context of the Egyptian Gold Crisis during the Reign of Saladin*, p. 132.

ly abandoned. The inhabitants had blocked the doors of many of the houses before they left. This brief hiatus has been linked to the time of the Ayyubid occupation of Qasr Ibrim.³⁴ Also other important settlements in southern Lower Nubia were abandoned in the latter half of the 12th century, and the cathedrals at both Qasr Ibrim and Faras were damaged.³⁵ The list of bishops of Faras, as compiled on one of the walls in the cathedral, came to an end in the late 12th century. Thereafter, the bishopric of Faras appears to have been combined with that of Qasr Ibrim.³⁶ All this testifies to the instability caused by the Ayyubid attacks in southern Lower Nubia.

In 1174, only two years after the Beni Kanz received military support from the Ayyubids in connection with the campaign against the Nubians and the Sūdān rebels in Aswan,³⁷ the Arab tribes of Upper Egypt saw their traditional privileges being threatened by the new sultan. Salah ad-Din gave the *iqta'* of the Beni Kanz to an Ayyubid emir, imposed heavy taxes on the Arab tribes, and reduced the number of Arab troops in the army. The Kanz ed-Dawla therefore instigated a revolt against the regime in 1174.³⁸ Salah ad-Din responded by sending a large expeditionary force to the south. The Ayyubids engaged the Beni Kanz in a fierce battle, where the latter were decisively defeated.³⁹ The Beni Kanz sought refuge in northern Lower Nubia, and they greatly influenced the developments there.⁴⁰

The Ayyubid campaigns of the 1170s caused severe political and demographic changes in Lower Nubia. The Beni Kanz principality in Aswan was crushed, and the Kunuz migrated to Lower Nubia in great numbers.⁴¹ The Fatimid order in Upper Egypt, Lower Nubia, and the Eastern Desert was thus destroyed.⁴² A consequence of the Ayyubid withdrawal from Lower Nubia was that the region remained outside the Ayyubid Sultanate spanning Egypt, Syria, northern Iraq, the Hijaz, Yemen, and parts of the North African littoral. Simultaneously, Lower Nubia north of Qasr Ibrim appears to have slipped out of Makurian control. The northern part of Lower Nubia was thus a region outside state administration, but this stateless zone still bordered on states with centralized governments both in the north and in the south. I consider the Ayyubid intrusion as the event that triggered the emergence of the Nubian frontier of the 2nd millennium CE. Later invasions by the Mamluks and the collapse of

34 EDWARDS, *The Nubian Past*, p. 231.

35 Ibid., p. 232.

36 Jakobielski, *A History of the Bishopric of Pachoras on the Basis of Coptic Inscriptions*, pp. 190–195.

37 See above.

38 BAADJ, *Saladin, the Almohads and the Banū Ghāniya*, p. 106.

39 Ibid., p. 107.

40 ADAMS, *Nubia*, pp. 524–525.

41 BAADJ, *The Political Context of the Egyptian Gold Crisis during the Reign of Saladin*, p. 135. See

also ADAMS, *Nubia*, pp. 524–525.

42 BAADJ, *The Political Context of the Egyptian Gold Crisis during the Reign of Saladin*, p. 135.

Site	Number of epitaphs	Date	Source
Kertassi	1	10th century	DBMNT
Tafa	43	9th–14th century (mainly 10th century)	DBMNT, Seignobos p.c.
Kalabsha	1	10th century	DBMNT
Derr	3	11th–12th century	DBMNT
Arminna	5	11th century	DBMNT
Jebel Adda	18	11th–12th century (?)	DBMNT, Seignobos p.c. com.
Debeira (Komangana)	2	10th century	DBMNT
Meinarti	5	11th century	DBMNT
Mirgissa	1	11th century (?)	Seignobos, p.c.
Total	79	Mainly 9th–12th century	

Table 2. Sites in Lower Nubia with epitaphs in Arabic. Sources: Database of Medieval Nubian Texts and Seignobos, p.c.

Makuria expanded the Nubian frontier until it stretched from the First to the Third Cataract.

The Islamization and tribalization of Nubia

Both archaeological remains and historical documents can give us some indications of the process of Islamization in Lower Nubia. Grzegorz Ochała's *Database of Medieval Nubian Texts*⁴³ records 28 epitaphs in Arabic from Lower Nubia, and Robin Seignobos has identified another 51 epitaphs in Arabic from Tafa, Jebel Adda, and Mirgissa (Table 2).⁴⁴ Most of these epitaphs preserve Arab names for the deceased, and the earliest epitaph comes from Tafa in northern Lower Nubia and records 832 CE as the year of death for Ibrahim, son of Ishakh.⁴⁵ In the late 9th century, Muslims were buried near Debeira, which is south of Faras.⁴⁶ Ibn Sulaym al-Aswani was sent as an envoy to Old Dongola by the Fatimids in the late 10th century, and he recorded that the northern part of Lower Nubia was open to Muslims. Al-Aswani furthermore commented that some of the Muslim inhabitants spoke poor Arabic, and this has been taken as an indication for conversions to Islam by the local Nubian-speak-

43 *Database of Medieval Nubian Texts*, <http://www.dbmnt.uw.edu.pl/>.

44 SEIGNOBOS, *L'Égypte et la Nubie à l'époque médiévale*, vol. 2, pp. 56–67, and SEIGNOBOS, p.c.

45 DBMNT 703.

46 DBMNT 513 and 514.

ing population.⁴⁷ There is also a conspicuous lack of late medieval churches in Lower Nubia.⁴⁸

An important factor in the Islamization of Lower Nubia was the migration of Arab tribes into the region.⁴⁹ The aforementioned Beni Kanz was the most influential Arab tribe in Lower Nubia. The Beni Kanz and the local Nubians intermarried, and in time they were recognized as the ethnic group of the Kunuz.⁵⁰ In the early 19th century, the territory of the Kunuz extended from the First Cataract to Wadi Seboua.⁵¹ The Islamization was partly caused by intermarriage between the Nubians and the immigrating Muslims.⁵² The process of Islamization in Lower Nubia thus seems to have started in the 9th century and then accelerated from the 10th century onwards, when the population in Lower Nubia appears to have adopted Islam in increasing numbers.

It is more probable that the Beni Kanz introduced a tribal organization to the communities in Lower Nubia, which had become stateless in the late 12th century, than that there was a gradual emergence of the tribal system in Lower Nubia. Based on travelers' descriptions, it is known that a tribal system existed in Lower Nubia in the early 19th century. John Lewis Burckhardt observed that the Kunuz were "subdivided into many smaller tribes, which have given their names to the districts they inhabit [...]. Great jealousies often exist amongst these different tribes, which sometimes break out in wars."⁵³ Nevertheless, there must have been local adaptations to the peculiar conditions on the Nubian frontier. In any case, the consequence of the absence of a state authority was that Lower Nubia became tribal territory.

During the remaining period of Ayyubid rule in Egypt, the relations between Egypt and Nubia appear to have been peaceful.⁵⁴ This changed when the Mamluks seized power in Egypt in 1250. The Mamluk rulers were warrior-kings and converts to Islam, and they thus adopted an aggressive policy towards Nubia in order to bring under control both insubordinate Arab tribes taking refuge there and the Christian kingdom of Makuria.⁵⁵ The remaining Christians in Lower Nubia probably retreated southwards, and the rocky and isolated region of Batn el-Hajar appears to have been the area chosen as refuge for these Christians.⁵⁶ There are few records of events

47 HOLT & DALY, *A History of the Sudan*, p. 15.

48 ADAMS, *Nubia*, p. 511.

49 EDWARDS, *The Nubian Past*, p. 254.

50 ADAMS, *Nubia*, p. 525.

51 BURCKHARDT, *Travels in Nubia*, p. 25.

52 ADAMS, *Nubia*, p. 525.

53 BURCKHARDT, *Travels in Nubia*, p. 26.

54 HOLT & DALY, *A History of the Sudan*, p. 18.

55 Ibid.

56 ADAMS, *Nubia*, p. 513.

in Lower Nubia during the 13th century,⁵⁷ and no Arabic funerary stelae have been found dating to this time.⁵⁸ This indicates that also part of the Muslim population fled from the region due to the unstable conditions there. Further research is needed in order to establish their destination.

The Mamluks also intervened in the politics of Makuria.⁵⁹ Shakanda, a Nubian prince with a claim to the throne, appealed to the Mamluks for help to overthrow the king. The Mamluks responded to the invitation by sending their army to Nubia.⁶⁰ The king in Old Dongola ordered the governor of Lower Nubia to evacuate the land before the arrival of the Mamluk intruders,⁶¹ and this may have contributed to the depopulation of Lower Nubia. The Mamluks defeated the army of Makuria at Old Dongola in 1276.⁶² Makuria became a vassal state of Egypt when the Mamluks installed Shakanda on the throne. The people of Makuria were forced to pay the *jizyah* – a per capita yearly tax imposed on non-Muslims.⁶³ From this time onwards, the kings of Makuria were mainly puppet kings, and the real contenders for the kingdom were the Mamluks and the Beni Kanz.⁶⁴ In 1317, the Mamluks for the first time installed a Muslim on the throne in Old Dongola. King Abdallah Barshambu was a member of the Makurian royal family, and he had converted to Islam while he was a Mamluk hostage in Cairo.⁶⁵ A stele with an Arabic inscription found in the so-called throne hall at Old Dongola indicates that the building was converted into a mosque in 1317. A recent reinvestigation of both the context and the text of the stele throws doubt on the current understanding of this find.⁶⁶ Nevertheless, several churches in Nubia were in time converted into mosques,⁶⁷ like the cathedral of Qasr Ibrim. The centralized government of Makuria seems to have collapsed in the latter half of the 14th century.⁶⁸ Both the Third and the Fourth Cataract may have been refuge areas for Christians in the Dongola Reach, as both regions have numerous settlements of late medieval date.⁶⁹

The Mamluk Sultanate in Egypt was defeated by the Ottoman ruler Selim I in 1517, and Egypt became a province of the Ottoman Em-

57 Ibid., p. 525.

58 SEIGNOBOS, *L'Égypte et la Nubie à l'époque médiévale*, vol. 2, pp. 56–67.

59 EDWARDS, *The Nubian Past*, p. 215.

60 ADAMS, *Nubia*, p. 526.

61 EDWARDS, *The Nubian Past*, p. 215.

62 ADAMS, *Nubia*, p. 526.

63 INSOLL, *The Archaeology of Islam in Sub-Saharan Africa*, p. 107.

64 ADAMS, *Nubia*, p. 529.

65 INSOLL, *The Archaeology of Islam in Sub-Saharan Africa*, p. 114.

66 SEIGNOBOS, *L'Égypte et la Nubie à l'époque médiévale*, vol. 1, pp. 353–356.

67 EL-ZEIN, *Islamic Archaeology in Sudan*, pp. 239–240.

68 EDWARDS, *The Nubian Past*, p. 216.

69 Ibid., pp. 233, 227.

pire.⁷⁰ The regions further south remained under tribal control until the 1560s,⁷¹ when the Ottomans advanced to the Second Cataract and created the province of Ibrim.⁷² Although the Funj Sultanate in Central Sudan never reached that far north, the Ottoman authorities apparently considered its rising power as a major threat to the Red Sea port of Suakin and the regions of Upper Egypt and Nubia.⁷³ In 1584, an Ottoman army passed the Batn el-Hajar and seized Sai Island and Sesibi. The army continued south beyond the Third Cataract, and the Ottomans allegedly defeated the Funj army at Hannek.⁷⁴ The following year, Sai Island and the wider region of Sikkoot/Sukkoot became a district in the southernmost Ottoman province on the Nile,⁷⁵ and the Ottomans established their southernmost fortress on Sai Island.⁷⁶ This event marked the end of the medieval era in Nubia and the beginning of the almost three centuries long period of Ottoman occupation of Nubia north of Sai Island.⁷⁷

We have now seen how the Nubian frontier slipped out of state control in stages: First, Lower Nubia with the Ayyubid occupation, and thereafter Upper Nubia with the Mamluk interventions. In the absence of centralized government, a tribal organization emerged – first in Lower Nubia and then spreading into Batn el-Hajar as the Christians retreated southwards into more marginal environments above the Second Cataract. A similar process took place in Upper Nubia after the collapse of Makuria in the late 1300s, and some Christians from the Dongola Reach appear to have sought refuge in the Third Cataract region.

This brings me to the core of this article, which is the following research question: Did the people inhabiting the area between the Second and the Third Cataract develop into a refuge area warrior society as an adaptation to the ecological and political environment on the frontier between states during the time span from c. 1200 to c. 1800?

Refuge area warrior society

When politically centralized states or empires expand into small-scale societies on their peripheries, the conquered people have three main options: incorporation and subjugation, resistance, or

70 ALEXANDER, *Ottoman Frontier Policies in North-East Africa*, p. 226.

71 ALEXANDER, *The Turks on the Middle Nile*, p. 15.

72 ALEXANDER, *Ottoman Frontier Policies in North-East Africa*, p. 227.

73 MÉNAGE, *The Ottomans and Nubia in the 16th century*, p. 144.

74 PEACOCK, *The Ottomans and the Funj Sultanate in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries*, p. 96.

75 ALEXANDER, *The Turks on the Middle Nile*, p. 18.

76 ALEXANDER, *Qalat Sai, the Most Southerly Ottoman Fortress in Africa*, p. 16.

77 HAFSAAS-TSAKOS & TSAKOS, *A Second Look into the Medieval Period on Sai Island*, p. 88.

flight.⁷⁸ In some regions, there are natural frontiers of unproductive and inaccessible land around the expanding states, e.g., mountains, deserts, or islands. Such regions can serve as suitable refuge areas, which the fleeing people can “use as natural fortresses to maintain their local autonomy.”⁷⁹

Reading Christopher Boehm’s ethnohistorical works on feuding among the tribal Montenegrins on the frontier of the Ottoman Empire before 1850,⁸⁰ I was struck by the parallels to the situation on the Nubian frontier of the 2nd millennium CE. According to Boehm, people taking refuge in inhospitable terrain may turn into a “refuge area warrior society,” and he considers this as a cross-cultural adaptation.⁸¹ In the Balkans, several such refuge area warrior societies appeared in rugged mountain regions that the Ottomans were unable to control, such as the Montenegrins in the Dinaric Mountains,⁸² the tribes in the Accursed Mountains of northern Albania,⁸³ and the Maniots in the Taygetus Mountains in the southern Peloponnese.⁸⁴ The people taking refuge on the frontiers of the Ottoman empire were often fleeing from forced conversion to Islam.⁸⁵

Michael Galaty, an archaeologist working in northern Albania, has identified four features of refuge area warrior societies that can be identified through archaeological and historical investigations:

1. Location on a frontier;
2. Relatively high population density in areas with low carrying capacity;
3. Permanent residence in defensible locations;
4. Evidence for inter- and intragroup violence, i.e., warfare and feuds.⁸⁶

I have already shown that the territory between the First and the Third Cataract was a frontier in the period under consideration, and I have suggested that the region between the Second and the Third Cataract was a refuge area for Christians from both Lower and Upper Nubia. In order to establish that Boehm’s theory is applicable for the Nubian case study, I will examine the three other features of refuge area warrior societies, as identified by Galaty, against the existing archaeological and historical data of Nubia. Let us first consider

78 BOEHM, *Mountain Refuge Area Adaptations*, p. 24, and FERGUSON & WHITEHEAD, *The Violent Edge of Empire*, p. 17.

79 BOEHM, *Mountain Refuge Area Adaptations*, pp. 24, 35.

80 Ibid. and BOEHM, *Blood Revenge*.

81 BOEHM, *Mountain Refuge Area Adaptations*, p. 35.

82 Ibid. and BOEHM, *Blood Revenge*.

83 GALATY, “An Offence to Honor Is Never Forgiven....”

84 HAFSAAS, *Mani as a Refuge Area Warrior Society during the Ottoman Period*.

85 E.g., GALATY, “An Offence to Honor Is Never Forgiven....,” p. 144.

86 Ibid., p. 153.

Fig. 1. Stretch of Batn el-Hajar showing mountains and the narrow river-bed. Photo by the author.



the second feature of the refuge area warrior adaptation: relatively high population density in areas with low carrying capacity.

High population density

Between the Second and the Third Cataract, the Nile crosses a region where the basement complex mainly consists of hard granite. In this region, the flow of the Nile is broken by numerous islands and cataracts, and the river-bed is narrow and steep-walled. In this landscape, the river bank has few tracts of alluvial soil. The Batn el-Hajar in the northern part of this stretch is indeed the most barren landscape along the Nile (Figure 1).⁸⁷ Still, it was in this rocky area that a substantial population sought a living in late medieval times – probably because of a gradual Islamization and violent state intrusions in Lower Nubia. The Second Cataract and the Batn el-Hajar seem to have been a barrier for the southward expansion of Islam for several centuries. During this time, the Batn el-Hajar had a relatively high population density in an area with low carrying capacity,⁸⁸ but this may not have been representative for the whole stretch up to the Third Cataract, as the section of the Nile between the Dal and the Third Cataract is more fertile.

A fundamental aspect for a population's adaptation to its natural environment is the population density in relation to the amount of food that can be produced in a standard year.⁸⁹ The high population density on the Nubian frontier in the late medieval and Ottoman pe-

⁸⁷ ADAMS, *Nubia*, pp. 22, 26.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 511.

⁸⁹ БОЕВМ, *Mountain Refuge Area Adaptations*, p. 175.

riods was likely a strain on the carrying capacity of the land. One solution for hungry people is raiding.⁹⁰ Contemporary written accounts from the Nubian frontier give the impression that the river route was very dangerous, and travelers had a high likelihood of being robbed and even killed by the local people.⁹¹ Another solution are land grabs: If a household desperately needed additional land for pasture or agriculture in order to survive, it is likely that this family would intrude on the land of its neighbors. This can lead to quarrels over productive land that can again turn into feuds.⁹² A feud starts with a homicide followed by revenge killing. Feuds are deliberately limited and consist of carefully counted killings, and they take place between two groups on the basis of specific rules for killing, pacification, and compensation.⁹³ Feuding is typically a feature of societies without or with limited centralized political control,⁹⁴ and this was the situation for the people on the Nubian frontier. Feuding was a result from having to cope with competition for resources in an environment with low carrying capacity and a relatively high population density. I will thus argue that the need for defensive housings on the Nubian frontier was not a consequence of external threats, but rather related to feuds within the refuge society that arose from interpersonal conflicts in a marginal area that had to be solved without a centralized government.⁹⁵ This brings us to the next characteristic: Permanent residences in defensible locations.

Defensive Settlements

Permanent residence in defensible locations is characteristic for the refuge area between the Second and the Third Cataract of the Nile. During the late medieval period, a distinctive type of tower-house, also called castle-house, was developed in this region.⁹⁶ This house-type can be linked to a wider tradition of tower-houses around much of the eastern and central Mediterranean, and the tower-houses of Nubia are probably the southernmost distribution of this type of defensive housing.⁹⁷

The tower-houses between the Second and the Third Cataract were almost always discrete structures with two stories. Most examples have substantial stone foundations up to two meters high, and this ground-floor was devoted to vaulted storage cellars. The

90 Ibid., p. 176.

91 EDWARDS & EL-ZEIN, *Post-Medieval Settlement*, p. 177.

92 BOEHM, *Mountain Refuge Area Adaptations*, p. 178.

93 Ibid., p. 194.

94 BOEHM, *Blood Revenge*, p. 39.

95 See *ibid.*, pp. 87–88.

96 ADAMS, *Nubia*, p. 514.

97 EDWARDS, *Medieval Settlement*, p. 158.

Fig. 2a-c.
Probable tower-
houses on Sai
Island recorded by
the Medieval Sai
Project in 2009.
a: Site 8-G-510;
b: Site 8-G-503;
c: Site 8-G-509.
Photos: Medieval
Sai Project,
Henriette Hafsaas
and Alexandros
Tsakos.



second story was built of mud-brick and provided the living quarters. The only access was through a doorway at the level of the second floor, and a retractable ladder must have been used to enter these houses.⁹⁸

In the Batn el-Hajar, notable tower-houses were located in places like Kulubnarti and Dal,⁹⁹ and the survey of the Third Cataract region has recorded this defensive house-type occurring singularly or in groups at eleven localities.¹⁰⁰ In 2009, the survey of the Medieval Sai Project, identified the ruins of three probable tower-houses on Sai Island (Figure 2a–c).¹⁰¹ It may be significant that all of them were located on the southeastern bank, which is the most barren part of Sai Island (Map 2).

At the end of the medieval period, the tower-houses were gradually replaced by another type of defensive housing – the castles or *diffis*, as they are called by the Nubians.¹⁰² Colonel George English, an American officer serving in Mohammed Ali's army in 1820–1821, remarked that many villages south of Sai Island had a fortified castle with towers at the corners,¹⁰³ which must have been *diffis*. Ruins of *diffis* are plentiful in the region between the Dal and the Third Cataract. At least 39 *diffis* have been recorded in the region between the Dal Cataract and Sai Island, and more than 90 *diffis* were registered in the Third Cataract region.¹⁰⁴ The survey of the Medieval Sai Project recorded eight sites with *diffis* on Sai Island (See Map 2 and Figure 3).¹⁰⁵ Since these fortified houses were described by George English, many of the *diffis* should predate the 19th century. I argue that this type of fortified house probably belongs to the period of Ottoman occupation of northern Nubia, i.e., from the late 16th century to the beginning of the 19th century. In contrast to the tower-houses of the late medieval period, the *diffis* were built near land that could be cultivated and *saqia* wells were commonly associated with the castles on Sai Island. This may suggest that there were no external threats in the region under Ottoman rule, but that the Ottomans did not interfere in local affairs. The locals could inhabit the most productive land, but they still needed defensive housing in case feuds erupted in order to solve interpersonal conflicts. Characteristic of both the tower-houses and the *diffis* is that they were too frail to withstand an army, but suitable as refuges during feuds.

98 ADAMS, *Nubia*, p. 515.

99 Ibid.

100 EDWARDS, *Medieval Settlement*, pp. 157–159.

101 HAFSAAS-TSAKOS & TSAKOS, "List of Surveyed Sites: Medieval Sai Project."

102 EDWARDS & EL-ZEIN, *Post-Medieval Settlement*, p. 194.

103 Ibid., p. 178.

104 Ibid., p. 194.

105 HAFSAAS-TSAKOS & TSAKOS, "List of Surveyed Sites: Medieval Sai Project."

Map 2. Sai Island with locations of tower-houses and diffis recorded by Medieval Sai Project in 2009. Graphics by the author.

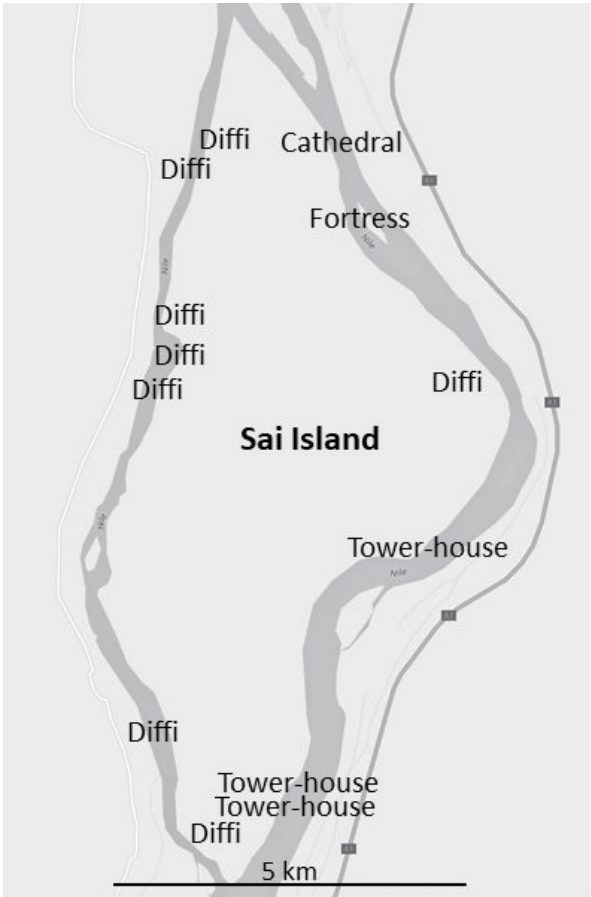


Fig. 3. Diffi of site 8-B-510 on Sai Island recorded by the Medieval Sai Project in 2009. Photo: Medieval Sai Project, Henriette Hafsaas and Alexandros Tsakos.



Evidence for warfare and feuds

The last feature of the refuge area warrior adaptation is evidence for warfare and feuds. Archaeological evidence for violence can be circumstantial like the presence of defensible housing. Skeletal material that could provide evidence for violence through traces on the bones is unfortunately largely lacking for the Nubian frontier in the late medieval and Ottoman periods due to restrictions on excavating Muslim graves.

The best source to throw light on inter- and intragroup violence is thus written accounts. Burkhardt traveled from Aswan to the Third Cataract in 1813, and he recorded several instances of intra-group violence in Nubia that appear to be instances of feuds.¹⁰⁶ I will quote one of these passages:

At the time of my visit, the Nubians belonging to Assouan were at war with their southern neighbours, occasioned by the latter having intercepted a vessel laden with dates, knowing it to belong to a merchant of Assouan. A battle had been fought [...] in which a pregnant woman was killed by a stone [...]. The southern party, to whom the deceased belonged, was now demanding from their enemies the debt of blood [...]. This the latter refused to pay, and being the weaker in numbers, [...] the men thought proper to retire from the field, [...] leaving only their women and female children, and retired with the males to Assouan. On my return [...], the Nubians were still at Assouan, where a caravan of women arrived daily, with provisions for their husbands.

A closer examination of archaeological and historical sources from Nubia has the potential for providing more information on the topics of both warfare and feuding, as well as the conditions in the refuge area warrior society more generally.

Conclusions: The refuge area warrior adaptation in Nubia

I have argued that a refuge area warrior society was established in the rocky and inaccessible tract of the Nile between the Second and the Third Cataract between c. 1200 and c. 1800. This was probably the refuge area of a population who adopted a segmentary tribal organization in order to cope in this marginal area outside state control. The supporting evidence that I have relied upon is the characteristic features of refuge area warrior societies: the location on a frontier between predatory states, a sudden population explosion

¹⁰⁶ BURCKHARDT, *Travels in Nubia*, p. 6.

in a rather barren area, the construction of defensible housing, a prevalence of raiding, and the use of violence as a solution to inter-personal conflict.

The success of the refuge area warrior adaptations depends on several factors. The refuge territory has to be defensible and of marginal economic and strategic value to the predatory power so that the will to subjugate the tribesmen is limited.¹⁰⁷ Still, the refuge area has to be productive enough to support the tribesmen economically, and it seems characteristic that refuge area warriors also tend to go raiding.¹⁰⁸ The rugged mountains and islands in the Batn el-Hajar and the Third Cataract region were both marginal in economic terms and provided advantages for self-defense and flight. The more productive land between the Batn el-Hajar and the Third Cataract was situated behind the barriers of the cataracts and thus rather inaccessible. Politically, a segmentary tribal organization is crucial by “providing both a military format and a political structure for [...] fast decision-making at various collective levels,”¹⁰⁹ and great value needs to be put on local autonomy and warrior honors.¹¹⁰

The retreat to a refuge area between the Second and the Third Cataract appears to have delayed the adoption of Islam by the people of the Nubian frontier, while the peculiar conditions in the region were crucial for the emergence of a regional identity.¹¹¹ In this article, I have discussed the characteristics of a *refuge area warrior society* and compared this adaptation with the conditions on the Nubian frontier between c. 1200 and c. 1800. The aim has been to add a dimension to our understanding of the late medieval and Ottoman periods in Nubia, and it also demonstrates the comparative value of the theory of refuge area warrior societies as a cross-cultural adaptation by adding a case study where a tribal organization with feuding and raiding in an inhospitable region became a successful strategy for cultural survival in face of expanding states.

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¹⁰⁷ BOEHM, *Mountain Refuge Area Adaptations*, p. 40.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid., p. 33, and GALATY, “An Offence to Honor Is Never Forgiven...,” p. 150.

¹⁰⁹ BOEHM, *Mountain Refuge Area Adaptations*, p. 33.

¹¹⁰ BOEHM, *Blood Revenge*, p. 41.

¹¹¹ See EDWARDS & OSMAN, *Survey in the Mahas Region*, p. 19.

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For Sale: Geography in Old Nubian Land Sales

Vincent W.J. van Gerven Oei

Introduction

In the Old Nubian corpus there are 22 records of land sales, the large majority being from Qaṣr Ibrīm.¹

According to Giovanni Ruffini, the typical format of a Nubian land sale starts with an invocation of the Holy Trinity, followed by a dating formula and a protocol listing several officials. The main body of the text contains a description of the seller and the buyer, a description of the property that is sold, and its price. The sale is closed by a list of witnesses and what they consumed, and the scribe(s).²

In this article I want to focus on the way in which land property is described within the Makuritan kingdom, based on a grammatical analysis of Old Nubian land sales. I will argue that such descriptions are always relative in nature, referring to adjacent plots oriented from south to north on the banks of the Nile. South is thus considered the “up/forward” direction. I will also discuss the multiple ways in which the function and ownership of land can be described. In particular, it appears that land ownership is transferred from mother to daughter. These interpretations are based on a reanalysis of several morphemes frequently occurring in Old Nubian land sales, which so far have not received a satisfying interpretation, in particular the topic marker -ϥION and adessive -ⲁϥ. The overall structure of land sales also seems to be determined by the process in

- 1 The extant land sales are published in BROWNE, *Old Nubian Texts from Qaṣr Ibrīm*, vol. III; RUFFINI, *The Bishop, The Eparch, and the King*; BROWNE, “Griffith’s Old Nubian Sale”; GRIFFITH, “Christian Documents from Nubia,” pp. 12–18; VAN GERVEN OEI et al., *The Old Nubian Texts from Attiri*, pp. 84–86. See also ŁAJTAR & RUFFINI, “Qaṣr Ibrīm’s Last Land Sale, AD 1463 (EA 90225).” I would like to thank Adam Simmons, Giovanni Ruffini, Robin Seignobos, and Alexandros Tsakos for their helpful comments and suggestions.
- 2 Cf. RUFFINI, *Medieval Nubia*, p. 77. Ruffini claims that the Old Nubian land sales are based on Coptic-language predecessors (ibid., pp. 144–146). NOWAK & WOJCIECHOWSKI, “Elements of Legal Practice in Christian Nubia” offers a critique of this assertion, suggesting there may have been a prior, indigenous legal tradition (199).

which they are written down, most likely based on an oral delivery by the owner taken down by the scribe without any prior drafting.

Besides more general propositions based on the current corpus of published Old Nubian land sales, I will also provide a full analysis and translation of the longest and most elaborate extant land sale, known under the siglum P.QI 3 36, including an attempt to visualize the geographical orientation of the plots described in it.

Unlike texts of a religious nature, which have received relatively more scrutiny in Old Nubian scholarship, legal documents provide fewer analogues with known textual formats and their contents are often locally specific and require contextual knowledge not readily available to the contemporary reader. As a result, this is very much work in progress, and comparative work on the geographical descriptions in Coptic land sales and the later Mamluk documents remains a desideratum.

Setting the boundaries

The description of the geographic location of a plot is accomplished by referring to its neighbors. As the plots were supposedly all laid out along the river Nile, reference only needs to be made to southern/upstream and northern/downstream neighbors:

(1)
P.QI 3 32.15-17

ōron seγΔλ παcñ παρρελο καλον σεγΔλ κογcαnnλλον

<i>oro-n</i>	<i>seud-il</i>	<i>pasi-n</i>	<i>parre-lo</i>
south-GEN	boundary-DET	Pasi-GEN	plot.PRED-FOC ³
<i>kalo-n</i>	<i>seud-il</i>	<i>koussan-n-il-lon</i>	
north-GEN	boundary-DET	Koussan-GEN-DET-TOP	

“The boundary of the south is the plot of Pasi; the boundary of the north is the (plot) of Koussan.”

(2)
P.QI 3 36.i.21

ōpwn σεγελαλ· coγñpīōcñΔλο καλον σεγελαλ ῑῑñ ḁciηλλο³

<i>orō-n</i>	<i>seueid-il</i>	<i>souērios-n-a-lo</i>
south-GEN	boundary-DET	Souērios-GEN-PRED-FOC
<i>kalo-n</i>	<i>seueid-il</i>	<i>irti-n as-in-il-lo</i>
north-GEN	boundary-DET	Irti-GEN daughter-GEN-DET-FOC

3 The glossing follows the Leipzig glossing rules. The following abbreviations have been used: 1, 2, 3 – first, second, third person; ACC – accusative; ADE – adessive; CONJ – conjunction; DAT – dative; DEM – demonstrative; DET – determiner; FOC – focus; GEN – genitive; LOC – locative; PF – perfect; PL – plural; PLACT – pluractional; PRED – predicate; PROX – proximate; PRS – present; PST2 – past 2; SG – singular; SUPE – superessive; TOP – topic.

“The boundary of the south is (the plot) of Souērios; the boundary of the north is the (plot) of the daughter of Irti.”

ōpōn wɛɣΔχ̣· ḏnion ḏctinaḏlo· kaḏoketΔḏ ḏnion ḏctinaḏlo·

(3)

P.QI 3 40.15-17

orō-*n* šeud-il anio-*n* asti-*n-a-lo*
 south-GEN boundary-DET Anio-GEN asti-GEN-PRED-FOC
 kalo-ketal anio-*n* asti-*n-a-lo*
 north-also Anio-GEN asti-GEN-PRED-FOC

“The boundary of the south is (the plot) of the *asti* of Anio. Also in the north (the boundary) is (the plot) of the *asti* of Anio.”

ōpōn wɛɣΔi koll(oɣ)θocč̣ḥnaḏlo· on kaḏon wɛɣΔi koll(oɣ)θ(oc)
 čēḥnaḏlo

(4)

P.QI 4 64.5-6

oro-*n* šeudi kollouthossi-*nn-a-lo* on
 south-GEN boundary Kollouthos-GEN-PRED-FOC and
 kalo-*n* šeudi kollouthossei-*nn-a-lo*
 north-GEN boundary Kollouthos-GEN-PRED-FOC

“The boundary of the south is Kollouthos’s (plot) and the boundary of the north is Kollouthos’s (plot).”

In these types of geographical descriptions, which mention boundaries, we consistently find the southern or upstream boundary mentioned first, followed by the northern or downstream boundary. Overall, the organization of plots from upstream to downstream is a common feature of Old Nubian land sales. Furthermore, plots are mainly identified by their owners. And finally, we find that every item of the geographic description is marked with the focus marker -ḏlo. This particular usage of this morpheme is well attested in other contexts, such as lists of foodwares and gifts.

Describing the plot

The description of the plot itself is always given before the description of its boundaries. The description is sometimes part of the selling formula, which typically starts with “I sell/sold.”

north is the (plot) of the (Church of) the 24 (Elders) of Mosmos.
One plot the valley of the orchard(?) in the cotton field(?) of Ibrim.
Next to the boundary of the south is the (plot) of the *asti* of Aneio,
at the boundary of the north is the (plot) of the (Church of) Peter of
Ibrim.”

We arrive here at our first serious interpretative issue, namely the meaning of the morpheme *-λε* in (5) *φεγρηλε* and (6) *σεγδαλε*. Traditionally, this morpheme has been interpreted as the conjunction “and,”⁴ but the problem is that in the context of land sales it never appears in isolation or conjoins sentences. In fact, its behavior is much closer to a lexical case marker. Both instances (5) *φεγρηλε* and (6) *σεγδαλε* are mirrored by the northern boundaries marked with the locative *-λο*: (5) *φεγρηλο* and (6) *σεγδαλλο*. Finally, we find the alternate couple a line before: (6) *ορον σεγδαλλο ... καλον σεγδαλλο*, both with locative *-λο*.

It is therefore my proposal to give this morpheme *-λε* a primary meaning related to place, comparable to locative *-λο*, for which I propose the interlinear gloss “ADE” for an adessive indicating a location adjacent to something. The same morpheme appears in several other land sales, attached to the words for south and north. Note that in all these cases, the old locative *-ο* has been replaced, again suggesting that the suffix *-λε* performs a similar function.

ΤΑΜΙΤ̄ ΠΙΓΙΤΑ· ΠΑΡΡΕ ΔΠΑ ΠΑΝΝΑ CΥΛΜΙ ΚΑΛΛΕ ΠΛΛΑ ΤΑΝΝΙΚΑ ΔΑΝΑ
ΔΕΝΔΑ ΓΑΠΙΚΚΑ ΕΙΤΙCΙΝ ΜΑΤ̄ΡΙΓΟΥΛ

(7)
P.QI 3 45.1-4

<i>tamit-in</i>	<i>pigit-a</i>	<i>parre</i>	<i>apa pan-na</i>	<i>sulmi</i>	<i>kal-le</i>
Tamit-GEN	share-PRED	plot	Apa Pan-GEN	Ibrim	north-ADE
<i>pil-l-a</i>	<i>tan-ni-ka</i>	<i>jan-a</i>		<i>den-j-a</i>	
grow-PRS-PRED	3SG-GEN-ACC	exchange-PRED		give>1-PLACT-PRED	
<i>ηapik-ka</i>	<i>eit-is-in</i>	<i>matir-igou-l</i>			
gold-ACC	receive-PST2-2/3SG	witness-PL-DET			

“It is the share of Tamit. The witnesses that Apa Pan sold us his plot growing next to North Ibrim and received the gold (are):”

The translation of (7) *σεγδαλλο* “next to North Ibrim” works here quite well, and if the author had meant “to the north of Ibrim” we would have expected a genitive case on *σεγδαλλο*.⁵

4 BROWNE, *Old Nubian Dictionary*, pp. 38–39.

5 The homophony between Old Nubian directive marker *-λε* and these Greek and Coptic clitics may have suggested the extension of the usage of *-λε* beyond its original semantic field. (It is unlikely that we are dealing here with a straightforward loanword from Greek or Coptic, as suggested by BROWNE, *Old Nubian Dictionary*, p. 38, following STRICKER, “A Study in Medieval Nubian,” p. 452. Just like the topic marker *-ειον* differs phonologically from the

The next example, however, poses significantly more interpretative problems.

- (8) P.QI 3 39.10–15
 αἰοῦ ἀγγεστοτῖλ ἀπον· πεσὶ ἐὰ ματρῶουδα· κειὰκῶϋκκα παρρε ἀννοῦ
 ἀπολοκο σεγείσι εἰν ἐαλλο ὄβολκα ἀττερῶυδα·νίλο πελῖ σίλινκα ὀρρε
 πῖκκον· σῑμι καλλε πῖκκocῖ· ὄανα τῖδῖcελο·

aiou aggestotil apo-n pesi-n ἡ maššouda
 1SG Aggestotil my.father-GEN Pesī-GEN son Maššouda
kheiakīššik-ka
choiak.eikšil-ACC
parre an-nou apo-lo-ko seu-eis-i ein
 plot 1SG-GEN my.father-LOC-from inherit-PST2-1SG DEM.PROX
ἡal-lo jō-o-l-ka aggešouda-ni-lo
 side-LOC go-PST1-DET-ACC Aggešouda-GEN-LOC
pel-in silimē-ka or-re
 produce-PRS.2/3SG Ibrim-ACC south-ADE
pik-ko-n silmi kal-le
 produce-PERF-PRS.2/3SG Ibrim north-ADE
pik-ko-s-in jan-a
 produce-PERF-PST2-2/3SG exchange-PRED
tij-j-is-e-lo
 give>2/3-PLACT-PST2-1SG.PRED-FOC

“I, Aggestotil, sold to *choiak-eikšil* Maššouda (and the (?)) son of Pesī, my father, the plot going from this side that I inherited through my father, which produces in (the plot) of Aggešouda, has produced for Ibrim next to the south, and had produced next to North Ibrim.”

Apart from distinguishing the precise number of beneficiaries of the sale, the main problem is the form of the verbs in (8) πῖκκον and πῖκκocῖ. Considering the previous example, it would make sense to interpret these as the same verb as (7) πῖλλα. Gerald Browne consistently treats these as forms of the verb π(λ) “to be, lie, remain,” but this verb cannot take an object. Moreover, it appears that the verb

conjunction *on*, the conjunction *-ae* differs from the adessive marker *-ae*; the former no longer exhibits assimilation, perhaps again under influence of the homophonous Greek and Coptic clitics.) This is also not unlikely, for example in English “from here to there” implies a conjunction between “here” and “there.” This interpretation is strengthened by the frequent presence of *-ae-keλ* on the last member of a conjunction. Etymologically, *keλ* means “limit” or “border,” so originally the coordinated sequence *X-ae (on) Y-ae (on) Z-aekeλ* may have been constructed as “to X (and) to Y (and) limit to Z,” reinterpreted as “X, Y, and Z.” The nearly complete absence of this construction from non-literary texts and the absence of cognates in contemporary Nubian languages suggest that this is again an innovation proper to literary Old Nubian. (STRICKER, “A Study in Medieval Nubian,” p. 452 mentions a single attestation of *-de* in modern Nubian, which I have been unable to verify. REINISCH’s *Die Nuba-Sprache* contains no entry for it.)

of existence is implied throughout in the descriptions. A better proposal in view of the presence of accusative $\varsigma\lambda\iota\mu\eta\kappa\alpha$ is perhaps the labile verb $\pi\epsilon\epsilon\iota$ “to grow, produce,” which also allows us to interpret the following description:

ΜΟΣΜΟΣ· ΜΑΘΤΟ ΤΟΣΝ̄ . ΤῪΛΟ ΠΑΡΡΕ ΠῪ ΜΑΛΛΕΛΟ ὈΡΩΔΕ ΙΕΖΕΚΙΑΣΙΝῪΛΟ·

(9)

P.QI 3 33 6.i.22

mosmos mathto tosin [t-il-lo *parre pi-l*
Mosmos east *tosin* [t-DET-LOC plot grow-PRS.DET
malle-lo orō-de iezekias-in-il-lo
everything-FOC south-ADE Iezekias-GEN-DET-FOC

“Mosmos: everything that the plot in the eastern *tosin* [t produces; next to the south (is) the (plot) of Iezekias.”

An interpretation of $\pi\iota(\lambda)$ as “to grow, produce” also allows us to clarify what appears otherwise to be an anomalous geographic description using “west” and “east” rather than “south” and “north” as geographic determiners:

ΠΑΡΡΕ ΤΑΝΝΙ ΤΙΝΟΚΟΝ· ΜΑΤΤΟΚΟΝ ΠῪΛΑ·

(10)

P.QI 3 42.2-3

parre tan-ni tino-k-on matto-k-on pil-l-a
plot 3SG-GEN west-ACC-CONJ east-ACC-CONJ produce-PRS-PRED

“his plot producing for the west and the east.”

All of this now allows us to read the largest and most extensive land sale in the Old Nubian corpus, land sale P.QI 3 36 (already briefly quoted in example (2) above).

Land sale P.QI 3 36

Land sale P.QI 3 36 (DBMNT 584) is the longest Old Nubian land sale that is presently known. It was first published in 1991 in Gerald M. Browne’s third volume of *Old Nubian Texts from Qaṣr Ibrīm*.⁶ The sale was written on a leather sheet of 46.5 by 51 cm, and carries the date of 5 Hathyr 907 AM, or November 1, 1191 CE.

The land sale documents a transaction in which a woman, Kapopi, who has no heirs of her own, sells all the land she inherited from her mother to Neuesi, the daughter of Adama, the eparch of Nobadia,⁷ and Anenikoli. Ruffini pays considerable attention to the document,

6 BROWNE, *Old Nubian Texts from Qaṣr Ibrīm III*, pp. 12–13.

7 RUFFINI, *Medieval Nubia*, p. 2.

with which he opens his monograph on Medieval Nubia based on the Old Nubian documentary evidence found at Qaṣr Ibrīm:

The date of Kapopi's landsale is interesting. She speaks to us in 1190, not quite two decades after a pivotal turning point in Nubian history. In 1172/73, Nubia had suffered a damaging raid by Shams ed-Dawla that broke over five centuries of peace between Christian Nubia and Muslim Egypt. This was an ominous event, heralding an ongoing deterioration in relations between the two powers and the ultimate collapse of Christian Nubia in the face of Islamization. But in the short term, Kapopi's land sale [...] reveal[s] her society's remarkable resilience.⁸

Not only the historical context of P.QI 3 36 is interesting, but also its content. As Bechhaus-Gerst already remarked, this land sale contains "detaillierte geographische Bezeichnungen" that could help us understand how Makuritan oriented themselves in the landscape and designated different properties along the fertile banks of the Nile.⁹ This article attempts to come to a better understanding of the geographical descriptions in this land sale, offering hopefully an improvement of the translation published in Browne's *editio princeps*,¹⁰ which appeared more than ten years before his *Old Nubian Grammar*.

The Plot Descriptions

The description of the properties sold in P.QI 3 36 is extensive, with a large number of plots spread out over different areas. I first give a structural analysis of the entire section.

(11)
P.QI 3 36.i.16–31

<ηαθ>ΤΟΝ ΔΙΕΙΔ ΠΑΡΡΕ ΓΛΟ·
 ▶ ΤΙΝΟ ΑΡΡΕΔΔΟ ΠΑΡΡΕ ΟΣΚΑΛΕ ΔΛΟ· ὄρων· ἀγγοῦρελα οὔατι ΓΛΟ·
 ὄρωδε νοῦωεν ἀκτινῶλο·
 ▶ ΚΑΛΟΛΟΝ ἱκινῶλο·
 ὄρων ἀγγοῦρελα παρρε οσκαλε ΔΛΟ· ὄρωδε ἀποστολосινῶλο
 ▶ ΚΑΛΟΛΟΝ ἀκτινῶλο·
 ΚΑΛΟΝ ἀγγοῦρελα παρρε οσκαλε ΔΛΟ· ὄρωδε ηατῑενῶλο·
 ΚΑΛΟΝ σεῦειΔῶλλον τῑακκισινῶλο·
 ΓΑΠῑ ΕΙΗΔΕΙΔ ΟΣΚΑΛΕ ΒΛΟ ΤΟΥСКІΤІ ꜥελ ἀνηΔλο· ὄρων σεῦειΔ·
 соῦῑριōснῶλο
 ΚΑΛΟΝ σεῦειΔ ῑτῑ ᾱκινῶλο·

⁸ RUFFINI, *Medieval Nubia*, pp. 2–3. See for a discussion of land sales as legal genre, *ibid.*, pp. 76–89.

⁹ BECHHAUS-GERST, "Anmerkungen zu den altnubischen Texten aus Qasr Ibrim," p. 16.

¹⁰ BROWNE, *Old Nubian Texts from Qaṣr Ibrīm III*, pp. 50–53.

ΜΟΣΜΟΣ·

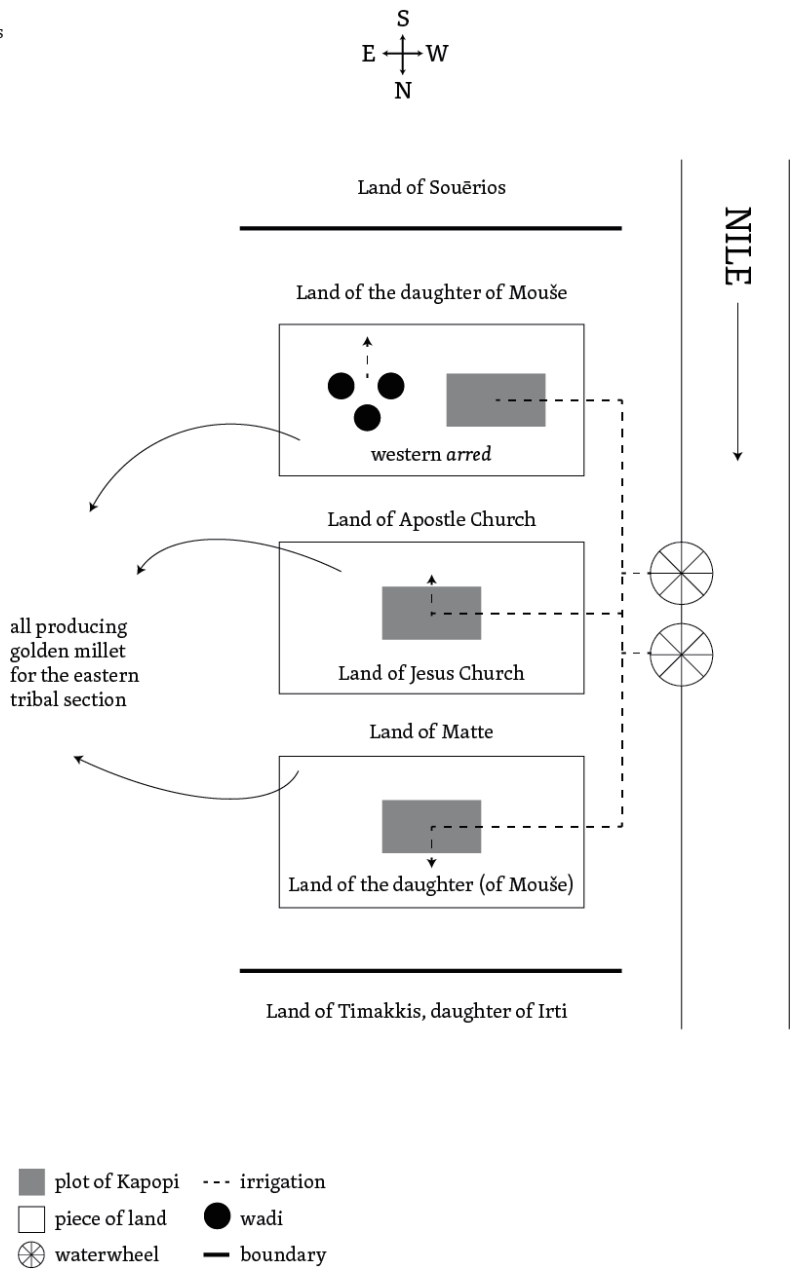
- ▶ ΜΑΘΟ ΤΟΣῆ Τῶλο παρρε μαλλελο ὀρωδε ιεζεκιδσινῶλο·
- ▶ ΚΑΛΟΛΟΝ ΕΙΟΓΓΙ Πῆνῶλο·
 - ▷ ΜΑΘΟ ΚΑΛΟ ΟΥΓΛΛΕΚΟΛΛΟ ΤΟΥΣΚΙΤΙ ΣΕΛ ΑΝΝΑΛΟ·
 - ▷ ΚΑΝΔΙΚΟΛΟ ΤΟΥΣΚΙΤΙ ΣΕΛ ΑΝΝΑΛΟ·
 - ▷ ΠΑCCKΟΛΑ ΤΟΥΣΚΙΤΙ ΣΕΛ ΑΝΝΑΛΟ·
 - ▷ ΠΑΡΡΕ ΔΟΥΓΤῆΙΝΙΛΑ ΠΑΚΚΑΤῆΛ ΑΝΝΑΛΟ· ΕΝΟΜΕΔΟΟΥΔΑΛ ΚΟΥΝΝΕΛΟ· ὀρωδε δῆνιειον αστινῶλο·
- ▶ ΚΑΛΟΛΟΝ ΕΝΟΝ ΑCΤΙΝῶλο·
 - ▷ ΟΪΚΟCῶΔ ΠΑΡΡΕ ΚΟΕΙΕΝ ΠΑΡΚῶλο ΑΝΝΑ ΜΑΛΛΕΛΟ ὀρωδε δῆνιειον αστινῶλο·
- ▶ ΚΑΛΟΛΟΝ ΠΕΤΡΟCΙΝῶλο·
 - ▷ ΟΪΚΟCῶΔ ΠΑΡΡΕ ὶλο· ΤΟΥCΚΙΤΙ ΣΕΛ ΑΝΝΑΛΟ· ὀρωδε ΤΟΥΚῆ ΚΤΑΛΟ·
- ▶ ΚΑΛΟΛΟΝ ΕΕΘΙΝ ΔCΙΝῶλο·
 - ▷ ΠΑΡΡΕ ΚΟῤ ΤΑΟΥΙ ΔΕΕΙΔ ΠΑΡΡΕ Βῶλο· ΤΟΥCΚΙΤΙ ΣΕΛ ΑΝΝΑΛΟ· ὀρεδε ΕΕΘΙΝ ΔCΙΝῶλο·
- ▶ ΚΑΛΟΛΟΝ ΠΕΤΡΟCΙΝῶλο·
 - ▷ ΠΑΡΡΕΝ ΤΑΕCΙΛΛΟΝ ΔΑΤῆΝ Πῶλλαλο·
 - ▷ ΠΑΡΡΕ ΣΕΝ ὀρων CΕΥΕΙΔῶ ΔΨΕΛΓΟΥΝ CΙΠῶλο·
- ▶ ΚΑΛΛΟΛΟΝ ΙCΙΝῶλο·

As we have discussed above, we assume that the description of boundaries is always the last element in the description of a plot (or in this case, group of plots). The beginning of a description can be discerned, in the case of this particular land sale, by the presence of the topic marker *-ειον* (often *-λον*), which is present from the second description onward. In literary texts, *-ειον* always follows the first constituent of the sentence,¹¹ and assuming this rule also holds for non-literary texts, its position tells us where to divide the plot descriptions. The appearance in a land sale of this morpheme that is otherwise associated with literary texts might also indicate an attempt of the scribe to elevate its language.

There are two pairs of phrases whose first constituent is not marked with the topic marker *-ειον/-λον*, namely (12) <ΜΑΘ>ΤΟΝ ΔΙΕΙΔ ΠΑΡΡΕ Γῶλο· followed directly by (13) ΤΙΝΟ ΑΡΡΕΔΔΟ ΠΑΡΡΕ ΟCΚΑΛΕ ὶλο·, and (20) ΜΟCΜΟC· followed directly by (20) ΜΑΘΟ ΤΟΣῆ Τῶλο παρρε μαλλελο. As a topic marker, *-ειον/-λον* marks background information and is therefore not expected at the beginning of a new section. Therefore, we would like to suggest that (13) <ΜΑΘ>ΤΟΝ ΔΙΕΙΔ ΠΑΡΡΕ Γῶλο· and (20) ΜΟCΜΟC· are not marked by *-ειον* because they are “section headers,” indicating a broad division into two sets of plots, whereas (13) ΤΙΝΟ ΑΡΡΕΔΔΟ ΠΑΡΡΕ ΟCΚΑΛΕ ὶλο· and (20) ΜΑΘΟ

11 VAN GERVEN OEI, “Subject Clitics,” pp. 3–5.

Fig. 1. The three plots for the tribal section of the east. Drawing by the author.



ΤΟCῒ ΤῒΛΟ ΠΑΡΡΕ ΜΑΛΛΕΛΟ are not marked by -ειον because they are the first in their section.

Additional evidence for this broad division may be gathered from the fact that the first set of plots are all owned by Kapopi, whereas in the second set she only owns (part of) the output. Furthermore, the “three plots” mentioned in (12) are listed as three separate plots in the description that follows.

<ΜΑΘ>ΤΟΝ ΔΙΕΙᾶ ΠΑΡΡΕ ΓῒΛΟ·

(12)

P.QI 3 36.i.16–17

mathto-n di-eia *parre 3-lo*
east-GEN tribal.section-DAT plot 3-FOC

“Three plots for the tribal section of the east.”¹²

Considering the reference to the “east” in (12) and the fact that these plots were adjacent to the Nile, which may be deduced by the reference to “waterwheels” in (17), we may perhaps conclude that the three plots are on also the eastbank of the Nile.

The three plots in (12) comprise one waterwheel plot in (13), another waterwheel plot on the land of the Jesus Church in (14), and one waterwheel plot on the land of the daughter in (15) (Fig. 1).

ΤΙΝΟ ΑΡΡΕΔΔΟ ΠΑΡΡΕ ΟCΚΑΛΕ ΔΛΟ· ὉΡΩΝ· ΑΓΓΟΥΡΕΛΑ ΟΥᾶΤΙ ΓῒΛΟ· ὉΡΩΔΕ
ΜΟΥΦΕΝ ΑCΤΙΝῒΛΛΟ·

(13)

P.QI 3 36.i.17–18

tinno arred-do parre oskale 1-lo orō-n aggoure-la
west arred-SUPE plot waterwheel 1-FOC south-GEN lupine-DAT
ouati 3-lo orō-de mouše-n asti-n-il-lo
wadi 3-FOC south-ADE Mouše-GEN daughter-GEN-DET-FOC

“One waterwheel plot on the western arred; three wadis for the lupine (plot) of the south; to the south the (land) of the daughter of Mouše.”¹³

The meaning of ἀρρε(Δ)- is obscure. The word is a hapax. Browne connects it with ἄρογ “rain” and ἄρογεῖν “irrigation,” but this is a questionable etymology. Perhaps it should be analyzed as ἀρρε-Δ-ΔΟ “on the wave,” but it is unclear what a “western wave” would mean in this context. The meaning of ἀγγοῦρε is less obscure. It only appears

12 For the meaning of ΔΙ and ΔΕ in (24) see VAN GERVEN OEI & TSAKOS, “The Etymology of the Toponym ‘Pourgoundi’.”

13 Adam Łajtar suggests that ΑCΤΙ could also be interpreted as the title *asti*. Considering the large number of women prominently involved in this exchange of land, it seems, however, reasonable to keep the translation “daughter.” Cf. ŁAJTAR, “Varia Nubica XII–XIX,” p. 101. See also RUFFINI, *The Bishop, The Eparch, and the King*, p. 61.

The land of the Jesus Church:

<i>kalo-lon</i>	<i>i(ēsou)s-in-il-lo</i>	<i>orō-n</i>	<i>aggoure-la</i>	<i>parre</i>
north-TOP	Jesus-GEN-DET-FOC	south-GEN	lupine-DAT	plot
<i>oskale</i>	<i>1-lo</i>	<i>orō-de</i>	<i>apostolos-in-il-lo</i>	
waterwheel	1-FOC	south-ADE	apostle-GEN-DET-FOC	

“As regards the north (the land) of the Jesus (Church): one water-wheel plot for the lupine (plot) of the south; to the south the (land) of the Apostle (Church).”

The land of the daughter (of Mouše):

<i>kalo-lon</i>	<i>asti-n-il-lo</i>	<i>kalo-n</i>	<i>aggoure-la</i>	<i>parre</i>
north-TOP	daughter-GEN-DET-FOC	north-GEN	lupine-DAT	plot
<i>oskale</i>	<i>1-lo</i>	<i>orō-de</i>	<i>matte-n-il-lo</i>	
waterwheel	1-FOC	south-ADE	Matte-GEN-DET-FOC	

“As regards the north, the (land) of the daughter (of Mouše): one water-wheel plot for the lupine (plot) of the north; to the south the (land) of Matte.”

The description then shifts to several boundaries. Perhaps these are the general boundaries of the three main plots described above. Syntactically, this may be indicated by the absence of topic marker $\epsilon\iota\omicron\upsilon\eta/\lambda\omicron\eta$ at the beginning of (16). This implies we are not dealing with the description of a new plot. Furthermore, the “two waterwheels” mentioned in (17) perhaps serve the three different waterwheel plots described above.¹⁴ This would mean that all three plots were linked through irrigation canals. The boundaries in question could therefore refer to the borders of the land that contains Kapopi’s waterwheel plots “for the tribal section of the east” served by two waterwheels of which she owns a third. Again from (17) we could infer that these three plots contained “millet of gold.”

14 As RUFFINI, *Medieval Nubia*, p. 80 suggests: "[T]he Qasr Ibrim land sales treat plots just large enough to be served by a single *saqiya* (waterwheel) or larger plots built up from such component units."

καλον σεγειδᾱλλον τῆακκικινᾱλο·

(16)
P.QI 3 36.i.20

kalo-n seueid-il-lon timakkis-in-il-lo
north-GEN boundary-DET-FOC Timakkis-GEN-DET-FOC

“The boundary of the north (is) the (land) of Timakkis.”

ἡαπῆ εἰμλᾱειᾱ οσκαλε ἔλο τογσκιτι ἄελ ἀνναλο·

(17)
P.QI 3 36.i.20–21

ḡapin eimil-a-eia oskale 2-lo touskiti wel
gold.GEN millet-??-DAT waterwheel 2-FOC third one.DET
ann-a-lo
1SG.GEN-PRED-FOC

“Two waterwheels for the millet of gold (plot?); one third is mine.”

ὀρων σεγειδᾱ· σογῆριὸσνᾱλο

(18)
P.QI 3 36.i.21

orō-n seueid-il souēriōsi-n-a-lo
south-GEN boundary-DET Souērios-GEN-PRED-FOC

“The boundary of the south (is) the (land) of Souērios.”

καλον σεγειδᾱ ῖρτῆ ᾱσινᾱλο·

(19)
P.QI 3 36.i.21

kalo-n seueid-il irti-n as-in-il-lo
north-GEN boundary-DET Irti-GEN daughter-GEN-DET-FOC

“The boundary of the north (is) the (land) of the daughter of Irti.”

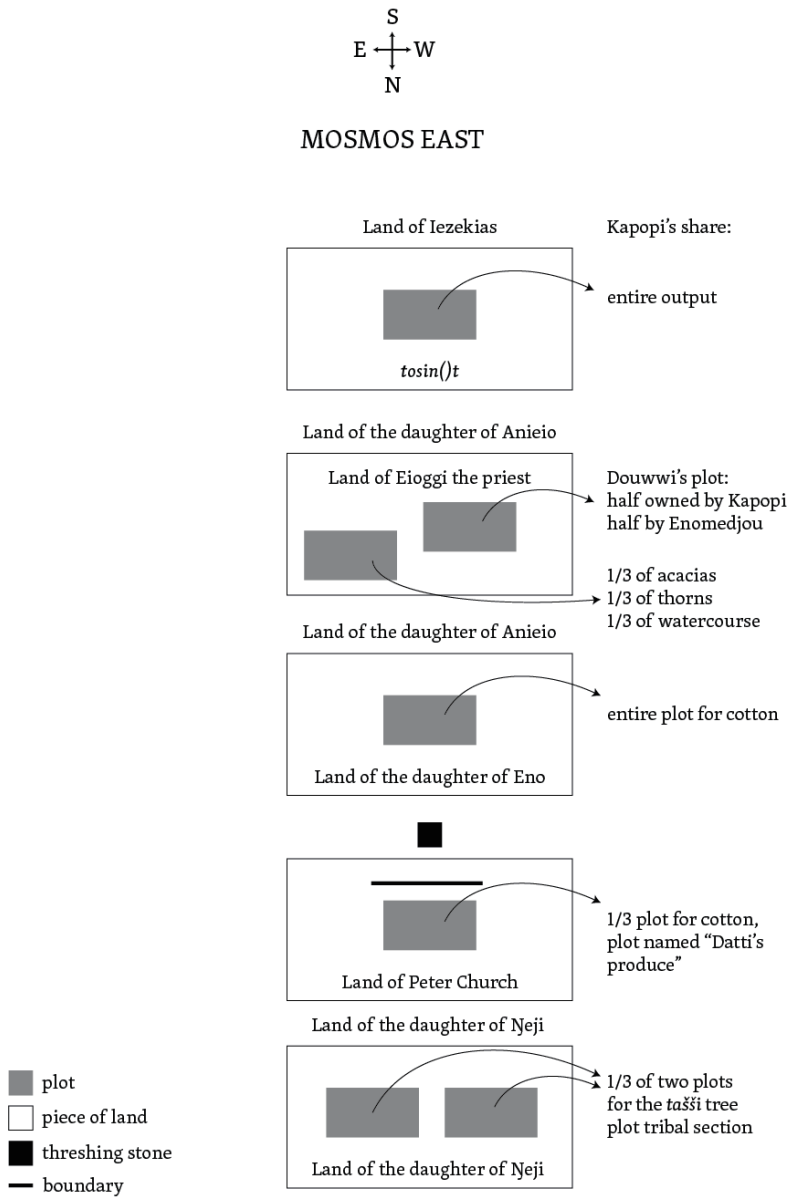
The presence of two northern borders to the three plots is puzzling. A solution would be to assume that Timakkis is the daughter of Irti, and (19) therefore a repetition of (16).

The expression (17) “(plot in) millet of gold,” is a hapax. It is not clear whether the specification ἡαπῆ “of gold” refers to the color, variety, or quality of the millet, or suggests a concrete monetary value. All other attestations of εἰμλ- are without further qualification of the type of millet referred to. Moreover, the morpheme -ᾱ between the stem and the dative is unaccounted for. Browne suggests a separate root εἰμλᾱ- “plot in millet,” which seems highly tentative.¹⁵

The description then moves on to what appears to be a different set of plots, located in Mosmos (Fig. 2). Mosmos is mentioned earlier in the sale, in a list of witnesses. One of them is called i.11–12 εἰπταεἰρι

¹⁵ BROWNE, *Old Nubian Dictionary*, p. 69.

Fig. 2. The plots in Mosmos. Drawing by the author.



ΜΟΣΜΟΝ ΓΟΥΨΑ ΕΙΝΗ “Eptaieri, the gouš of Mosmos.” The same place name is also attested elsewhere in the Qaşr Ibrīm documents: The scribe of land sale P.QI 3 32, David, is from Mosmos. Mosmos also appears to have had several churches. P.QI 3 38 mentions a Stauros Church, P.QI 4 78 and P.QI 4 79 a Raphael Church, and P.QI 3 40, P.QI 4 78, and P.QI 4 79 a Church of the Twenty-Four Elders.¹⁶

Here, Kapopi doesn’t own the plots themselves, but rather (parts of) what they produce.

ΜΟΣΜΟC· ΜΑΘΤΟ ΤΟCΝ· ΤΛΛΟ ΠΑΡΡΕ ΜΑΛΛΕΛΟ ΟΡΩΔΕ ΙΕΖΕΚΙΑCΙΝΛΛΟ·

(20)

P.QI 3 36.i.22

mosmos mathto tosin [t-il-lo *parre pi-l*
Mosmos east *tosin* [t-DET-LOC plot grow-PRS.DET
malle-lo orō-de iezekias-in-il-lo
everything-FOC south-ADE Iezekias-GEN-DET-FOC

“Mosmos: everything that the plot in the eastern *tosin* [t grows;
south (is) the (land) of Iezekias.”

The meaning of *τοCΝ· Τ* is obscure. The word is partially damaged, and no cognates can be found in Nile Nubian languages. Perhaps it is related to Midob *tòsì* “far away.”

The “Iezekias” mentioned in (20) may perhaps be the same person as referenced in land sale P.QI 3 40.26 *ὅρον CΕΥΑΛΛΟ ΕΖΕΚΙΑCΙΝ ΓΟΥΝΛΛΟ ΚΑΛΟΝ CΕΥΑΛΛΟ ΜΟCΜΟCΝ· ΚΑ·ΝΛΛΟ·* “At the boundary of the south is the (plot) of the land of Ezekias. At the boundary of the north is the (plot) of the (Church of) the 24 (Elders) of Mosmos” (see also (6)). Both land sales are about nine years apart, so this is a theoretical possibility.

Kapopi also (co-)owns produce from the land of the priest Eioggi:

ΚΑΛΟΛΟΝ ΕΙΟΓΓΙ ΠΝΛΛΟ· ΜΑΘΤΟ ΚΑΛΟ ΟΥΛΛΕΚΟΛΛΟ ΤΟΥCΚΙΤΙ ΞΕΛ ΑΝΝΑΛΟ·
ΚΑΝΔΙΚΟΛΟ ΤΟΥCΚΙΤΙ ΞΕΛ ΑΝΝΑΛΟ· ΠΑCCKΟΛΑ ΤΟΥCΚΙΤΙ ΞΕΛ ΑΝΝΑΛΟ·
ΠΑΡΡΕ ΔΟΥCΤΙΝΙΛΑ ΠΑΚΚΑΤ·ΤΛ ΑΝΝΑΛΟ· ΕΝΟΜΕΔΟΥΔΑΛ ΚΟΥΝΝΕΛΟ·
ΟΡΩΔΕ ΔΝΙΕΙΟΝ ΔCΤΙΝΛΛΟ·

(21)

P.QI 3 36.i.22-25

kalo-lon eioggi pr(esbuteri)-n-il-lo mathto kalo
north-TOP Eioggi priest-GEN-DET-FOC east north
joullē-ko-l-lo touskiti wel ann-a-lo
acacia-have-DET-LOC third one.DET 1SG.GEN-PRED-FOC
kandi-ko-lo touskiti wel ann-a-lo
thorn-have-LOC third one.DET 1SG.GEN-PRED-FOC

16 See RUFFINI, *The Bishop, The Eparch, and the King*, p. 146.

pass-ko-la *touskiti wel*
 dried.up.watercourse-have-DAT third one.DET
ann-a-lo *parre douwwi-n-ila*
 1SG.GEN-PRED-FOC plot Douwwi-GEN-DAT
pakk-att-il *ann-a-lo* *enomedjou-dal*
 share-NMLZ-DET 1SG.GEN-PRED-FOC Enomedjou-COM
koun-n-e-lo *orō-de* *anieio-n*
 have-PRS-1SG.PRED-FOC south-ADE Anieio-GEN
ast-in-il-lo
 daughter-GEN-DET-FOC

“As regards the north, the (land) of Eioggi the priest: in the north-east one third in what has acacias is mine, one third in what has thorns is mine, one third in what has the dried-up watercourse is mine; half in the plot of Douwwi is mine, I have it together with Enomedjou; to the south the (land) of the daughter of Anieio.”

The land of the daughter of Eno:

(22) P.QI 3 36.i.25-27 καλον ἐνον ἀστίνλλο· ὀκοκλᾶ παρρε κοειεν παρκλλο ἀννα μάλλελο
 ὀρωδε ἀνιειον ἀστίνλλο·

kalo-lon *eno-n* *ast-in-il-lo* *jokos-ila* *parre*
 north-TOP Eno-GEN daughter-GEN-DET-FOC cotton(?) -DAT plot
koeie-n *park-il-lo* *ann-a*
 tree-GEN cultivated.depression-DET-LOC 1SG.GEN-PRED
malle-lo *orō-de* *anieio-n* *ast-in-il-lo*
 everything-FOC south-ADE Anieio-GEN daughter-GEN-DET-FOC

“As regards the north, the (land) of the daughter of Eno: the plot for cotton(?) in the cultivated depression of the woods is entirely mine; to the south the (land) of the daughter of Anieio.”

The land of the Peter Church:

(23) P.QI 3 36.i.27-28 καλον πετρῶσινλλο· ὀκοκλᾶ παρρε ᾶλο· τογσκίτι τῆλ ἀνναλο·
 ὀρωδε τογκῆ κταλο·

kalo-lon *petros-in-il-lo* *jokos-ila* *parre 1-lo* *touskiti*
 north-TOP Petros-GEN-DET-FOC cotton(?) -DAT plot 1-FOC third
wel *ann-a-lo* *orō-de* *touk-in* *kt-a-lo*
 one.DET 1SG.PRED-FOC south-ADE strike-GEN stone-PRED-FOC

“As regards the north, the (land) of the Peter (Church): one plot for cotton(?), one third is mine; to the south is a threshing stone.”

The land of the daughter or Njeji:

καλολον γεῶν ἄσινῳ παρρε κοῦ ταϋϋι δεεῖα παρρε βλο· τοῦσκιτι
 γελ ἀνναλο· ὀρεδε γεῶν ἄσινῳ·

(24)

P.QI 3 36.i.28-29

kalo-lon njeji-n as-in-il-lo parre koir tašši
 north-TOP Njeji-GEN daughter-GEN-DET-FOC plot tree *tašši*
de-eia parre 2-lo touskiti wel ann-a-lo
 tribal.section-DAT plot 2-FOC third one.DET 1SG.PRED-FOC
ore-de njeji-n as-in-il-lo
 south-ADE Njeji-GEN daughter-GEN-DET-FOC

“As regards the north (the land) of the daughter of Njeji: two plots for the *tašši* tree plot tribal section, one third is mine; to the south the (land) of the daughter of Njeji.”

The final two plot descriptions seem again to refer back to earlier ones. The description of the Peter Church plot in the north (23) gives us the name of the plot, whereas the Jesus Church previously described in (14) is only mentioned but not further specified.

καλολον πετρῶσινῳ παρρεν ταῦσιλλον ἀττῆν πῶλλαο· παρρε ἔγεν
 ὀρων σεῦειλᾶ ἀφελγοῦν σινῳ·

(25)

P.QI 3 36.i.29-31

kalo-lon petros-in-il-lo parre-n taŋs-il-lon
 north-TOP Petros-GEN-DET-FOC plot-GEN name-DET-TOP
datti-n pil-l-a-lo parre we-n oro-n
 Datti-GEN produce-PRS-PRED-FOC plot one-GEN south-GEN
seueid-il añ-el-gou-n sip-il-lo
 boundary-DET live-PRS-PL-GEN mud(?) -DET-FOC

“As regards the north, the (land) of the Peter (Church), the name of the plot is ‘Datti’s produce.’ The boundary of the south of one plot (is) the mud(?) of the livestock.”

καλλολον ἰῆσινῳ·

(26)

P.QI 3 36.i.31

kallo-lon i(ēsou)s-in-il-lo
 north-TOP Jesus-GEN-DET-FOC

“As regards the north, the (land) of the Jesus (Church)”

Note that there appear to be several repetitions in the plot descriptions, in which a plot or boundary is further specified. (19) appears

to be a specification of (16), giving the name of the mother of Timakis, Irti; (25) gives the epithet of the plot of land of the Peter Church described in (23), while the land of the Jesus Church described in (14) is only mentioned again in (26) but without any additional information.

The reason for these repetitions could perhaps be the way in which these land sales were written down, namely not by the owner, but by a scribe. As in other land sales, the scribe is mentioned explicitly at the end of the document, in this case ii.5-6 ΜΑΨΟΥΔΑ ΔΙΑΛΚ/ ΤΙΝΟΝ ΓΕΩΡΓΙΩΣΙΚΟΛ “Maššouda, deacon holding the Georgios (Church) of the West.” One can imagine a scene in which Kapopi, sitting in front of or next to Maššouda, lists her numerous properties and at three occasions remembers additional information to be added to a previous entry. The scribe repeats the entry and adds the additional information: the name of a mother, the epithet of a plot, or, in the last case, no additional information at all. Kapopi maybe wrongly thought she had something to add.

It appears that both in the case of the three main plots and the plots of land in Mosmos, their order of appearance is from upstream to downstream, or from south to north. This conforms with the etymology of ορο “south,” which is related to the word ορυ “head.” In the spatial perception of Medieval Nubia, upstream was the “front.”

The order in which the properties of Kapopi are listed is also relevant. The first three plots “for the tribal section of the east” – a waterwheel plot, a plot on the land of the Jesus Church, and one on the land of the daughter of Mouše – are fully owned by her, planted with “millet of gold” and served by two waterwheels of which she owns one third. After these three main plots, we move on to a number of plots in Mosmos in which Kapopi has a stake in the harvest or the crops, the minor parts of the sale.

The land sale features multiple ways of identifying plots by relative geographical location, ownership, and their function within the agricultural environment. First of all, the land sale seems to make a distinction between wider areas of ownership or influence, which I have here translated with “(land)” (in other land sales explicit as ρογλ) and specific παρρε “plots.” The land is always identified with the owner, who is usually mentioned in the first phrase of the plot description, and is distinguished from the owner of a piece of land bordering on the south mentioned at the end of the description.

Additionally, the land sale mentions a number of borders, which appear to be an indication of the area in which the different lands and plots are situated.

In the land sale, we can find the following identifiers of land plots.

- ▶ Identification by owner: (18) “Souērios”; (20) “Iezekias”; (21) “Eioggi the priest”; (21) “Douwwi”; (21) “Enomedjou”; (15) “Matte”; Several owners are named “the daughter of”: (13), (15?) “the daughter of Mouše”; (16) “Timakkis” = (19) “the daughter of Irti”; (21), (22) “the daughter of Anieio”; (22) “the daughter of Eno”; (24) “the daughter of Njei”; And several properties belong to churches: (14) “the Jesus Church”; (14) “the Apostle Church”; (23), (25) “the Peter Church”;
- ▶ Identification by agricultural function: (13), (14), (15) “waterwheel plot”; (13), (14) “for the irrigation of the south”; (15) “for the irrigation of the north”; (17) “for the millet of gold”;
- ▶ Identification by geographical feature or landmark: (13) “on the western *arred*”; (13), “wadi”; (20) “the eastern *tosin*[*t*]” (22) “in the cultivated depression of the woods” (23) “threshing stone”; (25) “mud(?) of the livestock”;
- ▶ Identification by place name: (20) “Mosmos”;
- ▶ Identification by epithet: (25) “Datti’s produce”;
- ▶ Identification by beneficiaries: (12) “for the tribal section of the east”; (24) “for the *tašši* tree plot tribal section.”

As may be clear from the enumeration above, identification by owner is the most frequent. Note that the owner can be named in person or as the “daughter of,” or be a church. In case of the proper names, it is not always clear whether a man or a woman is indicated. Souērios, Iezekias, and Eioggi the priest are most probably male, whereas Enomedjou is a female name (containing *en* “mother”). Douwwi and Matte are both a hapax of unknown gender. Second most important appears to be a description of the agricultural function or geographical features of the plot.

The naming of plots was thus most prominently tied to ownership and agricultural function, rather than geographically fixed notions such as names of villages. It should also be noted that any indication of the size of the plots is absent. None of the sales include measurements that would indicate the surface area of the land that is sold.¹⁷

All forms of identification have also been attested in other land sales, except the last two – by epithet and by beneficiaries. Especially the latter raises important questions about the organization of the Medieval Nubian agricultural economy and the ways in which the produce was allotted, distributed, or sold. Perhaps the reference to “millet of gold,” destined for the “tribal section of the east” was indeed a form of payment.

¹⁷ Cf. RUFFINI, *Medieval Nubia*, p. 79.

The fact that (12) Δ_1 and (24) Δ_6 , if indeed correctly connected to Midob -*tí/-dí* “tribal section,”¹⁸ are otherwise only found in place names, may suggest that Nubian communities were organized around notions of kinship and tribal or clan affiliation. A similar claim is made by Ali Osman, who suggests a social integration “based upon lineages which are organized into territorial units known as Irki (home).” This *irki* was headed by a *dawokati*, “the elder wise man (of a lineage).”¹⁹

We find evidence that this was already in place in Medieval Nubia in another land sale from Qaşr Ibrīm, in which Mouna from lower Ibrīm sells land to Iōjoka and Mēna. He is, however, not paid directly by the buyers, but receives the money P.QI 2 26.i.25–26 $\text{COCETI } \text{PKN } \Delta\Delta\text{YKATTN } \text{EIO}$ “in the hand of Soueti, *dawokati* of the *irki*,” or “elder of the home.” Soueti is again mentioned in the list of witnesses as P.QI 2 26.i.33–34 $\text{COCETI } \text{CLMN } \Delta\Delta\text{YKATTLLO}$ “Soueti, *dawakati* of Ibrīm.” Although it is unclear whether Ibrīm should indeed be equated here with Soueti’s *irki*, or whether it is used as a totum pro parte. We also are unable to assert whether a *di* was smaller or larger than an *irki*. However, like *irki*, the usage of *di*, if translated correctly, appears to confirm the relation between family affiliation, territoriality, and place naming.

Finally, the sale also identifies different forms of ownership:

- Ownership of (parts of) plots: (12) “Three plots for the tribal section of the east,” (13), (14), and (15); (22) “the plot for cotton(?)”; (23) “one third” of “one plot for cotton(?)”; (24) “one third” of “two plots for the de (of) the *tašši* tree plot”;
- Ownership of equipment: (17) “one third” of “two waterwheels”;
- Ownership of harvest: (20) “everything that the plot in the eastern *tosin*[]t grows”;
- Ownership of crops: (21) “one third in what has acacias”; (21) “one third in what has thorns”; (21) “one third in what has the dried-up watercourse”; (21) “half in the plot of Douwwi”;
- Co-ownership: (21) “I have it together with Enomedjou.”

Conclusion

In this article, I have taken a closer look at the geographical description and place naming strategies for the different plots sold in Qaşr Ibrīm land sale P.QI 3 36, hopefully offering a significant improve-

18 VAN GERVEN OEI & TSAKOS, “The Etymology of the Toponym ‘Pourgoundi’.”

19 OSMAN, *The Economy and Trade of Medieval Nubia*, p. 87. Osman elaborates: “The main philosophy behind the *dawokati* system is to keep the affairs of the lineage a secret from the ruling authorities as much as possible and to protect them from any official intervention” (ibid., p. 88).

ment of the interpretation of part of the text, in part by a reinterpretation of the morphemes -ϵION/-λON and -ΔΕ. The resulting analysis has showed the underlying structure of the plot descriptions, and the different ways in which the plots could be referred to in legal transactions between Nubian citizens. The way in which the document has been structured, with several repetitions, suggests us something about the way in which it was composed, namely without prior draft and dictated by Kapopi directly to the scribe Maššouda. Finally, the land sale also provides us with valuable insights into geographical identification and ownership structure in Makuritan society.

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From Nub to Dahab: The Lexical Shift of Fadija Nobiin to Arabic in Egypt

Asmaa Taha

Introduction

A language shift occurs in a minority language if the dominant language is widely used in various domains. A shift has occurred, and is still occurring, in Fadija Nobiin because of contact with the Arabic language, which is used by the majority. In this paper, I will investigate language shift in the Nobiin language, particularly lexical change in Fadija Nobiin. More specifically, this paper analyzes heavy lexical borrowing from Arabic into Fadija Nobiin, using a Nobiin folk song as an example. Factors that influence language maintenance and shift are discussed to reflect on the Arabic language influence on a minority language. Nubians, including the speakers of Fadija and other vernaculars, are concerned about their language endangerment and many are showing commitment and cooperation to revitalize it and save it from extinction.

Background on Fadija Nubian

Nubian civilization originated and thrived in the Nile Valley for thousands of years in the area between the first cataract in southern Egypt and the sixth cataract, north of Khartoum, the capital of Sudan.

The origin of the word Nubia is dubious, though the word *nub* is documented in several dictionaries as “gold,” which is feasible since the Nubia is known for rich gold mines and reserves. Emery’s analysis of the origin of the word *nub* in his book *Egypt in Nubia* explains that this area was called Nubia in relation to *nub*,¹ which

1 EMERY, *Egypt in Nubia*, p. 16.

means “gold” in the Nubian language, yielding Nubia as “the land of gold,” and it is still a land rich in gold reserves. The etymology of *nub* meaning “gold” is also found in many Nobiin songs which refer to Nubia as “the land of gold” expressing nostalgia for going back to “the land of gold.” Mohammad Ali-Bik² asserts that on the eastern bank of Nile River, along Wadi Allaqi in the Nubia district, a number of ancient gold mines have existed from the time of pharaohs.

The Nubian language belongs to the Eastern Sudanic language family in the Nilo-Saharan phylum.³ According to Rilly, Nubian, along with Tama, Nyimang, Nara, and the extinct Meroitic language, is a member of the northern branch of Eastern Sudanic.⁴ Nubian comprises different languages with varieties spoken in different areas in eastern Darfur, northern Nuba mountains of Sudan, and the Nile valley of northern Sudan and southern Egypt.⁵ Before the forced resettlement in the 1960s due to construction of the Aswan High Dam, Egyptian Nubians lived on the Nile banks in southern Egypt.

In this paper, the term “Nubian language” is mainly used to refer to the two Nubian languages in Egypt, Fadija and Mattoki. The Fadija⁶ and the Kunuz speak two different Nubian languages, which are not mutually intelligible. In Egypt, before the resettlement in 1963/1964, the Kunuz occupied the northern part of the region, while the Fadija occupied the southern part of Nubia up to the border of Sudan. The Kunuz speak Mattoki spoken around Aswan and Kom Ombo in Southern Egypt. Mattoki and Andaandi (Dongolawi), mainly spoken in Northern Sudan, are two related language varieties of the Nile Nubian language family. Fadija speak Nobiin (Nile Nubian), which is a language spoken both in Egypt and Sudan: Half-

2 I would like to thank my dear uncle Dr. Mohammad Ali-Bik, a professor of Mineralogy and Geochemistry at the Department of Geological Sciences in the Egyptian National Research Center, for his all help during and after the process of writing this paper. He read different versions of the paper and provided thorough and valuable feedback. Dr. Giovanni Ruffini was one of the first people who encouraged me, before and after writing the research paper, by providing significant references, and valuable feedback. I am very grateful for his endless support. I would like to express my warmest thanks and deep appreciation to Marcus Jaeger for his considerable efforts to enhance and improve the quality of the manuscript. I am thankful for all his thorough and valuable comments and suggestions. In addition, I would like to thank Sanna Abou Ras for sharing her research findings with me, checking data accuracy, and for connecting me with other native Fadija speakers. I am also very grateful for Mr. Magdy Abdulhamid who provided me with many data and examples and who also guided me patiently and constructively to understand and analyze the song. I would like to extend my thanks and gratitude to my uncle Hamed Ali-Bik for the endless hours he spent in listening to the song, help with its interpretation, and recording it for my reference. Lastly, my heartfelt gratitude to my dear friend Juliana Norton who provided constant constructive feedback in editing few versions of the manuscript.

3 GREENBERG, *The Languages of Africa*, p. 391.

4 RILLY, “The Linguistic Position of Meroitic,” p. 401.

5 ALAMIN, “Noun Phrase Constructions in Nubian Languages,” p. 204.

6 In this study, *fadiḡa* is written as *Fadija*, but some scholars might write it as *Faddicca* or *Fadicha*.

awi, Sukkoth, and Mahas are dialects of Nobiin spoken in Sudan and Fadija is spoken in Egypt. Fadija⁷ refers to both the ethnic group as well as the dialectal variety of Nobiin. Modern Nobiin is a descendant from Old Nubian which is also a Nile Nubian language.⁸ All examples and data used in this paper are provided by native speakers of Fadija Nobiin.⁹

Nubians have maintained their language and customs throughout centuries, despite important historical and linguistic transformations experienced by the region.¹⁰ The Low Dam of Aswan completed in 1902 and the phases of raising its height in 1912 and 1933 caused extensive damage to Nubian agriculture. However, the most significant changes took place after the forced relocation of the Nubians in both Egypt and Sudan due to the construction of the High Dam in the 1960s. Nubians in Egypt were relocated by the Egyptian government to areas remote from the Nile. Displacement to different environments away from the Nile and living among non-Nubian communities had a serious impact on the cultural and linguistic heritage of the people of the Nubia. Unfortunately, this is the case with all Nubians (both Kunuz and Fadija), who lived in their new districts in both Egypt and Sudan.

Abdel-Hafiz states that

three Nubian groups (Kunuz, Faddicca, and Arabs) lived in the deserted areas to south of Aswan, Egypt. Their villages (total of 41 villages) were scattered along the two banks of the Nile [...]. The Kunuz group occupied the northern villages (17 villages), whereas the Faddicca group used to reside in the southern villages (16 villages). The Arab tribes lived in the middle (8 villages).¹¹

He adds that the 2005 parliamentary election records show that 52,155 Nubians live in the Kom Ombo area in Aswan, with the Fadija constituting 57.8% of the population (30,155 inhabitants) the Kunuz constituting 32.7% (or 17,050 inhabitants), and the Arabs constituting 9.5% (4,950 inhabitants).

Dr. Mohamed Taha and Ahmed Ali Bik report there were very few Nubian villages established before the major resettlement in

7 According to the folk etymology, Fadija is comprised of two words; *fa* which means valley or basin and *dija* which means the number five in Nobiin language; possibly referring to the five tribes that inhabited the region.

8 BECHHAUS-GERST, *The (Hi)story of Nobiin*, p. 22.

9 To ensure the accuracy and authenticity of the examples and data obtained in this paper, ten native Fadija speakers participated in this study as the research of this paper is a not a native speaker, but a heritage Fadija. For objectivity, the researcher included speakers from three different Fadija villages: few are related to the researcher herself.

10 EMERY, *Egypt in Nubia*, p. 17.

11 ABDEL-HAFIZ, "The Attitude of Egyptian Nubians towards Their Vernacular and Arabic," p. 1.

1963/1964 such as West Sehel.¹² They both add that there are two major areas of Nubian villages in Aswan occupied by Kunuz and Fadija including the villages located around Kom Ombo such as Balanah and Adendan. They indicate that there are 17 villages of Kunuz as Kalabsha and Medig, while there are 18 villages of Fadija, such as Getta and Ibrim. They report that majority of the Kunuz live in the northern part of Aswan, while most of the Fadija live in the southern part of Aswan. Dr. Mohamed Taha and Ahmed Ali Bik add that there are some villages which have high diversity of Kunuz and Fadija, such as Aneeba and Toshka, and that there are some villages around Kom Ombo such as Balanah and Adendan. Dr. Mohamed Taha reports that there are few villages around Aswan, occupied in 1933 after the second phase of raising the height Dam of Aswan, such as West Sehel and West Aswan. Moreover, Ahmed Ali-Bik points out an additional area inhabited by non-Nubian Egyptians; people living there are called “the Arabs” and they live in 8 villages located mainly between the Kunuz and the Fadija villages in Aswan.

Nubian Egyptians have been in language contact with non-Nubian Egyptians on a small or non-constant scale as a result of trade, tourism or migration for job opportunities in metropolitan cities. However, beginning from 1964, the resettlement in Egypt brought Nubians into direct and constant contact with non-Nubian Egyptians, and with Arabic as an official dominant language. This, in turn, caused a language shift in Nobiin. Monitoring the linguistic changes in the Nobiin language is the aim of this paper, focusing mainly on the Fadija Nobiin variety.

Factors influencing language maintenance and shift

Appel and Muysken analyze “ethnolinguistic vitality,”¹³ a model proposed by Giles, Bourhis, and Tylor comprised of three main factors: status, demographic and institutional support.¹⁴ Ethnolinguistic vitality plays a crucial role in language maintenance and shift and it is the vitality of an ethnolinguistic group “which makes a group likely to behave as a distinctive and active collective entity in intergroup situations.”¹⁵ The model proposes that high vitality leads to language maintenance or “shift towards extended use,” while low vitality causes a shift in the minority language, which is an observably

12 Special thanks to my uncle Ahmed Ali-Bik who provided essential information about the history of Nubians in Egypt as well as the several inhabitation areas there. A big thanks to Dr. Mohamed Taha, a Fadija native speaker from Ibrim and a Nobiin instructor, who provided full support with geographical information, the song analysis, and glossing.

13 APPEL & MUYSKEN, *Language Contact and Bilingualism*, p. 33.

14 GILES, BOURHIS & TAYLOR, “Towards a Theory of Language in Ethnic Group Relations,” p. 308.

15 *Ibid.*, p. 308.

plausible explanation of the Fadija Nobiin situation. Moreover, Appel and Muysken emphasize that “ethnolinguistic minorities with little or no group vitality would eventually cease to exist as distinctive groups. Conversely, the more vitality a linguistic group has, the more likely it will survive and thrive as a collective entity in an intergroup context.”¹⁶ Although this model does not focus on language transmission from one generation to another, I prefer it because it highlights the major factors influencing language maintenance and shift. In addition, I argue that the high ethnolinguistic vitality of Fadija Nobiin is one of the main reasons behind its survival and thriving. Therefore, I propose to apply the model of ethnolinguistic vitality to Fadija Nobiin.

Status factors

Language status

In Egypt, Arabic is not only the official language, but also a language of high esteem because it is the language of the Qur’an and by extension is the language of the Islamic religion. However, Nubians retain their own language as a means of social communication with each other, in spite of the serious changes that have impacted their language, especially after the displacement and the merger with the other strata of the Egyptian society. Consequently, Fadija Nubian is not considered as high in status as Arabic. Arabic is the main vehicle of communication in various domains, which makes the process of the language shift in Fadija Nobiin extensive, pervasive, and persistent. Close contact with Arabic has also resulted in Nubian bilingualism. There are two types of bilingual Nubian speakers, “those who are skilled bilinguals fluent in both a Nubian dialect and Arabic, and those who are much more at ease with Arabic.”¹⁷ Rouchdy considers this second type of speakers “non-competent” or “imperfect bilinguals.”¹⁸

Although Appel and Muysken argue that minority speakers might have a negative attitude, “a feeling of linguistic inferiority,” towards their own variety or consider it as low status,¹⁹ in my experience Fadija Nubians are very proud of their language, but they are also aware of the importance of learning Arabic in order to achieve academic and professional achievements. For example, all the Fadija speakers who have participated in this study have strong value of their cultural and ethnic identity, i.e., Nubians are attached to cultural traditions, linguistic identity, and their ethnicity.

16 APPEL & MUYSKEN, *Language Contact and Bilingualism*, p. 33.

17 ROUCHDY, *Language in Contact*, p. 339.

18 Ibid., p. 341.

19 APPEL & MUYSKEN, *Language Contact and Bilingualism*, p. 34.

In her study of the Egyptian Nubians attitude towards Arabic and Nubian languages, Abou Ras confirms that her participants have positive attitudes towards both languages. They favor learning and using Nubian, but they also understand that Arabic is essential for their education, lives, and religion.²⁰ Rouchdy believes that Nubian pride is one of the factors that preserved the language “opposed to a situation where speakers consider themselves an underprivileged linguistic minority.”²¹ In other words, Nubians have pride in their language and ethnicity which is considered a crucial element for language maintenance and preservations.

With regard to the language status of Fadija Nubians, some speakers of the dominant language stigmatize Fadija Nubians and all Nubian varieties. The media played a role in spreading these negative attitudes. For example, many movies in Egyptian cinema stigmatize Nubians and portray them as speaking incomprehensible Arabic and/or working lower-class jobs. The stigmatized and pejorative image has been featured in movies since the 1930s, such as *Ilfamūs ʔa-sihirj*²² (*The Magic Lamp*), *Bawab ilšimarah* (*The Doorman of the Building*), and *ʔuṯmaṇ wi ʔali* (*Othman and Ali*). Recent television shows in 2000 and 2013 still depict the stigmatized portray of Nubians, such as *ḥuruf ilnasʔb* (*Letters of Fraud*), and *nikdeb law ʔulna: mabinhibif* (*We Would Be Lying, If We Said We Are Not in Love*). Rouchdy states that Nubians were said to speak *barbari*, a pejorative term referring to a Nubian speaker with a heavy accent in Arabic or who could not be understood by non-Nubians.²³ Moreover, “the Arabic word *rutana*, meaning foreign or unintelligible speech is often used by non-Nubian speakers (i.e., Arabic speakers) to refer to all Nubian varieties and other vernacular languages.”²⁴ As a speaker of Nobiin, I indeed experienced situations in which I felt inferior to non-Nubian speakers at schools in Egypt.

Economic status

Before 1964, Fadija Nubians formed an independent, complex, agriculture-based community who used to live by the banks of the Nile river, the source of life. There were limited education opportunities before the resettlement and the most common jobs were sailing, fishing, and farming. There were limited cultivable areas and a

20 ABOU RAS, The attitude of Egyptian Nubian University students towards Arabic and Nubian languages, p. 72.

21 ROUCHDY, *Language in Contact*, p. 339

22 In this paper, International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA) transcription of Egyptian Colloquial Arabic is used to better represent the variations in the pronunciation of allophones between Arabic and Nobiin. The IPA transcription system is used to represent both Fadija and Arabic to unify the transcription system and represent the differences and similarities between the borrowed and source words. See Appendix 2 for details.

23 ROUCHDY, *Nubians and the Nubian Language in Contemporary Egypt*, p. xiv.

24 ТАНА, “The Lexicon in Endangered Languages,” p. 5.

small food supply due to the heightening of the old Dam of Aswan leading to the submergence of vast areas of lands. Therefore, many Nubian men had to migrate to bigger cities in Egypt, like Cairo and Alexandria, and to the country of Sudan, to find employment.²⁵ The increasing number of the Nubians migration for work lead to “a transmission of more Arabic to their children when they returned home on holiday. This factor is a primary indicator in the attrition of the Nubian language.”²⁶

Nubians were known to work in low-income jobs, such as doorkeepers and some jobs in hotels and restaurants: “For generations the Nubians have earned their livelihood as domestic servants or as sailors of the Upper Egyptian Nile, in both of which professions I think they may be considered masters.”²⁷ Egyptian Arabs almost always confined these jobs to Nubians, not only because of their limited educational opportunities, but also for two important reasons, which are derived from their culture: their good personal hygiene and honesty. Although the nature of Nubians’ jobs once carried social and linguistic stigma, this is no longer the case, as Nubians have shifted and broadened their occupations. They now play an important role in Egyptian society.

The low economic status of Nubians could be considered a crucial factor for the language shift from Fadija Nubian toward Arabic. Nubians who travelled to big cities in search of a livelihood had to learn the majority language to get better jobs and attain a better standard of living. In the past, Fadija were planning to return to their homeland villages after retirement or building up some savings, but nowadays that is not necessarily the case. Many Nubians do not plan to retire to their home villages, especially after their relocation.

According to Abou-Ras, “Egyptian Nubian university students inside and outside the Nubian regions have a positive attitude toward Arabic and Nubian languages [...] not only in terms of religion and education, but also for integration.”²⁸ Learning the dominant language might not have negative effects on the Egyptian Nubian speakers, but many Nubians, including myself and all who participated in this paper, have fears and concerns about their language endangerment and loss.

Social status

Some Fadija Nubians who lived in Cairo and urban cities tend to shift towards Arabic in order to be considered of high social status.

²⁵ EMERY, *Egypt in Nubia*, p. 17.

²⁶ ABOU RAS, *The Attitude of Egyptian Nubian University Students towards Arabic and Nubian Languages*, p. 17.

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Ibid., p. 79.

Nubians who shift towards Arabic, “Arabized” Nubians, do not necessarily have low self-esteem about their native tongue, but they want to fit in the new society. Abdel-Hafiz notes that “although Nubians are emotionally attached to their respective vernaculars, they are aware of the importance of Arabic as a tool for educational advancement and social promotion.”²⁹ Rouchdy observes that a rapid language decline among Cairo Nubian speakers was noticeable and the dominance of Arabic was found on phonological, lexical, and syntactic levels.³⁰

The older generations of Nubians have both language loyalty and competence, which is represented in their continuous use of their mother tongue. The language loyalty of the younger generations is manifested in their great interest to learn their language and in the amount of time invested and spent to achieve this goal. There are many young Nubians taking language classes in Cairo and Alexandria to learn Nobiin, such as the Nobiin Language Club in Cairo. Poeschke explains that Nubian children have “very limited competence in Nubian, but represent the future generations.”³¹ The younger generations, especially those who live outside the Nubian regions, are not as competent as their elders because they are not given opportunities to improve their competence and fluency with their elders.

Because of their awareness of their unique ethnicity as well as language preservation efforts, Nubians began socializing with other Nubian speakers of the same or different social class. Rouchdy believes that socialization is the most important factor in language maintenance.³² She asserts that “if a minority language ceased to be used in homes for purposes of primary socialization, the maintenance of that language is threatened despite any growth of ethnic awareness.”³³ Abdel-Hafiz’s results confirm Rouchdy’s research that Nubian is highly used among relatives and friends within the family domain, but they use Arabic to talk about politics, religion, and sports.³⁴ Abou-Ras reports that fluent speakers use Nubian at home, especially in “non-academic public settings,” while Arabic is usually used in academic domains. Fluent speakers can use either Arabic or Nubian in other linguistic domains.³⁵ To elaborate, her study reveals that

29 ABDEL-HAFIZ, “The Attitude of Egyptian Nubians towards Their Vernacular and Arabic,” p. 16.

30 ROUCHDY, *Nubians and the Nubian Language in Contemporary Egypt*, p. 32.

31 POESCHKE, *Nubians in Egypt and Sudan*, p. 116.

32 ROUCHDY, *Nubians and the Nubian language in Contemporary Egypt*, p. 17.

33 *Ibid.*, p. 17.

34 ABDEL-HAFIZ, “The Attitude of Egyptian Nubians towards Their Vernacular and Arabic,” p. 16.

35 ABOU RAS, *The Attitude of Egyptian Nubian University Students towards Arabic and Nubian Languages*, p. 73.

15 percent of participants in the Nubian region use NL³⁶ when they talk about politics and the economy. 20 percent of the participants use NL when they discuss religious issues and 25 percent use NL to discuss football matches. On the other hand, 70 percent use NL to discuss family issues. [...] Most Nubians living in the Nubian region use NL to discuss family issues. Outside the Nubian region, 35 percent use NL to discuss family issues. This percentage is surprising as the participants live in an Arabic speaking environment. Participants living outside the Nubian region will not use NL to discuss issues of other domains.³⁷

Demographic factors

Relocation and resettlement

The essential element that caused the shift from Nubian to Arabic is the relocation of Nubians in Egypt in the 1960s because of the construction of the High Dam. Nubians used to live in remote areas apart from non-Nubian Egyptians. Nubians resisted the Arabic interference in their language by taking advantage of living in their own community. Approximately 50,000 Nubians had to abandon their lands to resettle in a new geographical area, which is known as “New Nubia.”³⁸ Old Nubia meant, and still means, more than some land beside the Nile River; it has been a symbol of life and culture. Even today, Nubians have nostalgia to go back to Old Nubia. Rouchdy believes that some negative factors were not considered while relocating Nubians, such as the location of houses on the basis of close kin rather than family size.³⁹ In other words, in Old Nubia one’s next-door neighbor was also one’s relative, but that was not considered during the relocation. All Nubians were then moved to the resettlement villages according to family size. It is important to note that the new houses were not located near the Nile, which is so sacred and significant in Nubian culture and tradition. Similarly, Appel and Muysken believe that the geographical distribution of minority group members generally affects language maintenance and shift.⁴⁰ Minority groups, like Fadija Nubians, tend to live clustered in the same areas before or after their relocations, a key element in the survival of a minority language. After being forcibly relocated from Old Nubia, they were scattered both socially and emotionally, unlike before when families lived very close to each other.

36 NL refers to Nubian languages.

37 ABOU RAS, *The Attitude of Egyptian Nubian University Students towards Arabic and Nubian Languages*, p. 46.

38 JANMYR, *Nubians in Contemporary Egypt*, p. 128.

39 ROUCHDY, “‘Persistence’ or ‘Tip’ in Egyptian Nubian,” p. 93.

40 APPEL & MUYSKEN, *Language Contact and Bilingualism*, p. 35.

The resettlement allowed close contact with not only southern Egyptians in Aswan, but also with Mattoki Nubians. Mattoki and Fadija are two Nubian languages, so Kunuz and Fadija speakers cannot understand each other. Hemdan⁴¹ states that, especially after the resettlement, Kunuz and Fadija spoke Arabic to communicate with each other. Consequently, Fadija Nubians encounter various changes in different aspects of life: language, culture, customs, social class, education, and ancestral land in their interactions with these different groups. After relocation, Nubian women had to work in a different linguistic environment outside their homes. They started to work in the markets, which brought them in direct contact with Arabic speakers and in turn, affected their use of the Nubian language as well as their interaction with their children. Nubians were in daily contact with *sʿaʿajdah* “Southern Egyptians” who speak *sʿiʿidi*: “southern Egyptian dialect of Arabic,” which influenced and still influences the Nubian language. Eventually, all the situations mentioned above led to the endangerment of Nubian language and a threat to its survival. It could be argued that providing schools, mosques, markets, and electricity were positive outcomes of the relocation. However, these services could have been provided in Old Nubia, or the Egyptian government could have moved Nubians to areas near the Nile River. Moving out of Old Nubia was one of the crucial factors which has negatively affected the Fadija language and culture.

Marriage

Endogamy is common in some cultures and ethnic groups, including Nubian Egyptians. Fernea indicates that Nubians prefer to marry within their kin groups.⁴² It is important to note that within endogamous marriage, it was easier for the family and community to solve problems between spouses. Moreover, Nubians were in favor of endogamous marriage resulting in preserving their culture, traditions, ethnicity, and their language, especially before the resettlement in 1963. Nubians who married non-Nubians were not usually welcomed by the community. According to Rouchdy, even the intermarriage between Fadija Nubians and Mattoki Nubians was not very common.⁴³ Yet, this has recently changed among educated, urban Nubians. There are not only Fadija /Mattoki marriages, but even some case of marriage between Nubians and non-Nubians.

Non-Nubian Egyptians also did not favor intermarriage, because Nubians were perceived to speak what was referred to as “broken”

41 Sabraia Hemdan is a Fadija native speaker from Abu-Simbel village, who has been very helpful in providing examples as well as song interpretation.

42 FERNEA, *Contemporary Egyptian Nubia*, p. 303.

43 ROUCHDY, “‘Persistence’ or ‘Tip’ in Egyptian Nubian,” p. 95.

Arabic, to come from a lower social status, and to have darker complexions. However, non-Nubian Egyptians mingled with Nubians, attended Nubian weddings and Nubian baby showers,⁴⁴ and visited Nubian homes. Due to the extended contact between Egyptian Nubians and non-Nubians and the occupational shift of Nubians, intermarriage did not remain as rare as it had been. Intermarriage did allow the use of Arabic to expand in several domains, such as at home, which became a real threat to the survival of the Nubian language. Appel and Muysken state that “mixed or inter-ethnic” marriages between the speakers of minority and majority languages will most likely result in allowing the prestigious language, or the dominant language, to be the first language of children.⁴⁵ Given that, social changes necessitate language shift towards the dominant language.

Urban and non-urban speakers

It is likely to have monolingual Arabic children, who are Nubians in origin, both in big cities such as Cairo and Alexandria and in small cities such as in Aswan and Luxor. According to the interviews she collected during her visit to Egypt in 1979, Rouchdy has noted that there are three types of Nubians: monolinguals who speak Arabic only; monolinguals who speak Nubian only; and bilinguals (some of them speaking both Arabic and a Nubian language, and non-competent bilinguals).⁴⁶ Rouchdy explains that the monolinguals who speak Arabic were born in big cities, while the monolinguals who speak Nubian lived in villages but moved later to big cities.⁴⁷ She adds that younger non-competent bilinguals speak Arabic but tend to understand and speak only some Nubian, while older non-competent bilinguals speak both Nubian and Arabic with Nubian language interference. Figure 1 represents Rouchdy’s classification of Nubian speakers.⁴⁸

As for the fully competent bilinguals, they can easily switch between Arabic and Nubian based on their preference, the linguistic domain as well as people who they interact with. Abou-Ras reports that most of the Nubian participants in her study who live in urban and non-urban areas speak both Arabic and Nubian when they interact with proficient bilingual Nubians. Based on the results of her study, collected from both questionnaires and interviews with Nubian participants, she concludes that

44 Nubians have parties to celebrate the birth of a new baby.

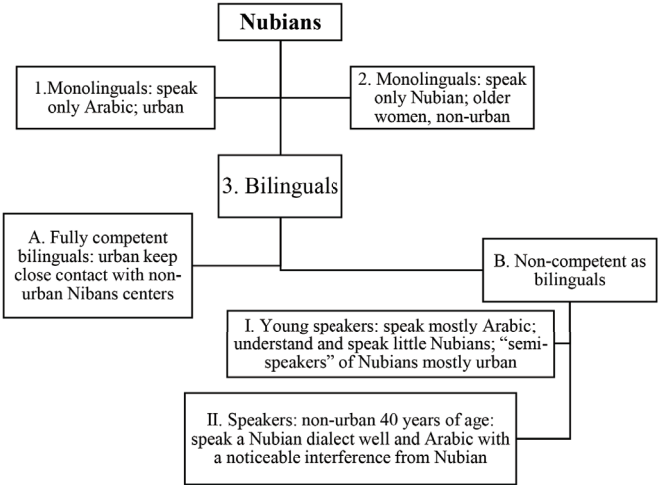
45 APPEL & MUYSKEN, *Language Contact and Bilingualism*, p. 35.

46 ROUCHDY, “Persistence’ or ‘Tip’ in Egyptian Nubian,” p. 98.

47 Ibid., p. 21.

48 Ibid., p. 22.

Fig. 1. Rouchdy's illustration of the types of bilinguals and their competence levels, as well as whether they are urban or non-urban Egyptian Nubians.



30 percent of participants in the Nubian region speak only Nubian with people who speak Nubian and Arabic, while 20 percent speak both Arabic and Nubian. 50 percent speak Arabic only because they are not able to speak Nubian. [...] Outside the Nubian region, the results show that 80 percent of participants speak Arabic language when talking to someone who speaks Arabic and Nubian because they cannot speak Nubian. Similar to participants in the Nubian region, those who live outside the Nubian region wish they could speak Nubian when they talk to people who speak both Arabic and Nubian. This feeling stems from the fact that the Nubian language is a live manifestation of the Nubian identity that all Nubians feel attached to. Only 20 percent prefer to speak Nubian and none chose to speak both Arabic along with Nubian.⁴⁹

Institutional, governmental, and other factors

Religion

Nubia became Christian in the middle of the fifth century, followed by the Arab expansion to Egypt in the seventh century. Faraji confirms that “Christianity in Nubia gradually emerged beginning in the late fourth and early fifth centuries and was marked by various stages of progression leading to the Byzantine missions of the sixth century.”⁵⁰ He adds that the Nubian King Silko’s victory against the Blemmyes in the middle of the fifth century marks a turning point in

49 ABOU RAS, *The Attitude of Egyptian Nubian University Students towards Arabic and Nubian Languages*, pp. 48-49.
50 FARAJI, *The Roots of Nubian Christianity Uncovered*, p. 85.

the Christianization of Nubia, rather than the Byzantine missions. Following 641, the Nubian region was conquered by “Muslims who started to migrate to Christian Nubia from the eighth century until the eleventh centuries, in which the northern portion of Egyptian Nubia was totally occupied.”⁵¹ The linguistic and cultural contact between the Arabs and Nubians is not new, dating back centuries. It has been argued that the early contact between Arabs and Nubians was prior to the Islamic conquest of Egypt. Taha reports that trade and migration took place between the two groups across the Red Sea and parts of Africa.⁵² Islam spread in Egypt, and by the fourteenth century Arabic was extensively used. With the advent of Islamic Nubia and intermarriage, more lexical borrowing from Arabic occurred. Taha considers this type of borrowing a common feature of dominant groups, usually after migration or conquest.⁵³

It is important to point out that Islam in Nubia has changed greatly, as well as the influence of Islam on the use of the Nobiin language. When answering the question whether all Nubian should speak Arabic as it is the language of the Qur’an, more than half of the participants who reside in Nubian regions believe that it is essential to speak Arabic for religious purposes, but they refuse to disregard their ethnic language on account of their Islamic identity.⁵⁴ In her study, Abou-Ras conducted surveys and interviewed Nubians who live within the Nubian regions along with those who live in non-Nubians areas. She reports that

outside the Nubian regions, less than half of the participants (10 percent + 20 percent) think that it is a necessity to speak [Arabic] as it is the language of Qur’an. More than half of the participants, 60 percent (40 percent + 20 percent), do not agree. Only 10 percent are neutral.⁵⁵

Nubians usually use Arabic to discuss religious topics due to the Islamic influence as well as the media. More than 80% of the Nubian speakers, living in Nubian areas, use Arabic when discussing religious issues, while those who live in non-Nubian areas solely use Arabic to discuss religious domains.⁵⁶

51 FERNEA, *Contemporary Egyptian Nubia*, p. 43.

52 TAHA, “The Influence of Dongolawi Nubian on Sudan Arabic,” p. 1.

53 *Ibid.*, p. 2.

54 ABOU RAS, *The Attitude of Egyptian Nubian University Students towards Arabic and Nubian Languages*, p. 59.

55 *Ibid.*, pp. 59–60.

56 *Ibid.*, pp. 45–48.

Media

Mass media and communication systems have led to a significant language shift in the Nubian language. The Egyptian government's provision of electricity to Nubian houses allows Nubians to have televisions and radios. With Arabic as the dominant official language, most shows, programs, and broadcasts are in Arabic, which promotes learning Arabic and fosters the Arabic culture. Furthermore, Rouchdy argues that Nubian songs were only broadcast on the radio and "children grow up listening to it while watching Arabic programs only."⁵⁷

Nubians use the Arabic script on Twitter, Facebook, and text messages to communicate with each other. This is not only because it is the dominant language, but also because the Nubian languages are written in the Nubian alphabet, which is not as not accessible as Arabic. As a result of using Arabic scripts to write Nubian in mass media and communication, the Arabic language continues to impart its increasing influence. However, this has recently changed due to the several literacy books developed using the Nubian script to teach the language. In a continuation of the efforts devoted to facilitate accessing the Nubian characters, the Sophia Nubian font was created in compliant with the universal Unicode typeface. Abou-Ras states that "even though there are Nubian characters, not all Nubians know that the Nubian language can be written."⁵⁸ I argue that more efforts need to be exerted to raise the awareness of Nubians and non-Nubians regarding the fact the Nubian can be written, which will help in language resurrection and revitalization.

Education

Arabic, being the dominant official language, was and still is the only medium of instruction in schools as well as universities. Educational opportunities for Nubians have greatly improved after the resettlement, which resulted in better educated women and the spread of Arabic. According to Rouchdy, Nubian women in urban areas are more educated than Nubian women in rural areas.⁵⁹ Rouchdy also added that urban Nubian women are fluent in Arabic and speak Arabic to their children, who could turn into Arabic monolingual speakers or semi-speakers of Nubian.⁶⁰

Appel and Muysken consider children's proficiency in a minority language as a main factor in boosting the maintenance of that language.⁶¹ Nubians are aware of the importance of reviving their

⁵⁷ ROUCHDY, *Nubians and the Nubian Language in Contemporary Egypt*, p. 18.

⁵⁸ ABOU RAS, *The Attitude of Egyptian Nubian University Students towards Arabic and Nubian Languages*, p. 64.

⁵⁹ ROUCHDY, *Nubians and the Nubian Language in Contemporary Egypt*, p. 19.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 18.

⁶¹ APPEL & MUYSKEN, *Language Contact and Bilingualism*, p. 42.

language, which is why they teach it to their children now. Therefore, Nubians launched educational campaigns to teach the Nubian language. The 2014 Egyptian Constitution stipulates preserving the rights of minorities including Nubians with a promise of relocating Nubians to their homelands, i.e., Old Nubia. However, the 2014 Egyptian Constitution is no longer in effect. Moreover, initiatives to teach Nubian culture in Egyptian universities, such as South Valley University and the University of Alexandria, are no longer encouraged or carried out.

Government and its services

Up to now government officials paid no attention to the Nubian language, which posed a threat to its maintenance. Governmental and administrative services are in Arabic, which forces Nubians to learn the majority language. They have to learn Arabic to get the services they need, which expands the use of Arabic with little account to Nubian language. Appel and Muysken ascertain that when a dominant language is always used as the medium of communication, the usefulness of the minority language will diminish.⁶²

Lexical borrowing

Browne indicates that loanwords in Old Nubian are from Greek, Coptic, Arabic, Pre-Coptic Egyptian, and Meroitic.⁶³ In general, the lexicon of the Fadija Nubian underwent two major processes: vocabulary loss and vocabulary addition. Three types of borrowing from Arabic are discussed with examples below.

Need-based borrowing

Rouchdy illustrates that particular words were borrowed into the Nubian language because they were originally not found in Nubian culture.⁶⁴ Dimmendaal highlights that borrowed words enter into a language in “smaller or larger sets related to specific cultural domains rather than to basic vocabulary.”⁶⁵ Some lexical borrowing from Arabic occurred because new life domains were introduced into the Nubian culture: terminology about Islam, education, and law, as well as modern tools and machinery. Unfortunately, further research on the reasons for the intense lexical borrowings in certain domains is still needed.

Rouchdy has noted that during her visit in 1979, the Nubians she interviewed used only Arabic words for greeting such as *izzajukum*

⁶² Ibid., p. 37.

⁶³ BROWNE, *Old Nubian Grammar*, p. 10.

⁶⁴ ROUCHDY, *Nubians and the Nubian Language in Contemporary Egypt*, p. 29.

⁶⁵ DIMMENDAAL, *Historical Linguistics and the Comparative Study of African Languages*, p. 265.

“how are you?” or *ahlan* “hi,” while very few Nubians used the Nubian greeting *maskagna* “How are you doing?”⁶⁶ In Fadija Nobiin, greeting words are commonly borrowed from Arabic used in both urban and non-urban areas. Table 1⁶⁷ below provides some examples of loanwords and phrases used for greetings.

Table 1. Greetings.

Loanwords	Arabic source	English translation
<i>?al?hamdu-llila:</i>	<i>?al?hamdu-llila:</i>	praise to Allah
<i>afjalogo</i>	<i>?affja</i>	stay well, good bye
<i>herlogo</i>	<i>xajer</i>	stay blessed

Some of words or phrases borrowed from Arabic might have Islamic nature and connotation, Table 2 below presents some examples of such loanwords.

Table 2. Terms related to Islam.

Loanwords	Arabic source	English translation
<i>sala:</i>	<i>s^ʕala:h</i>	prayer, praying
<i>sallir</i>	<i>bas^ʕalj</i>	I pray
<i>qamamah</i>	<i>gameʕ</i>	mosque
<i>aza:b</i>	<i>?za:b</i>	torture, punishment
<i>din</i>	<i>din</i>	religion

As illustrated in Table 3 below, many words which are related to school and education are borrowed from Arabic, entering the Nobiin language.

Table 3. Terms related to education.

Loanwords	Arabic source	English translation
<i>medresa</i>	<i>madrasa</i>	school
<i>kitab</i>	<i>kitab</i>	book
<i>modaresa</i>	<i>mudaris</i>	teacher
<i>gelam</i>	<i>?alam</i>	pen
<i>geraja</i>	<i>?eraja</i>	reading
<i>fehmo</i>	<i>fihm</i>	understand
<i>telmiza</i>	<i>tilmiz</i>	student

Some borrowed words related to modern tools and machinery have entered Nubian. Table 4 includes some examples.

Table 4. Terms related to technology

Loanwords	Arabic source	English translation
<i>arabija</i>	<i>?arabija</i>	car
<i>gater</i>	<i>?atr</i>	train
<i>wabur, babur</i>	<i>wabur</i>	machine or motor

66 ROUGHDY, *Nubians and the Nubian Language in Contemporary Egypt*, p. 20.
67 Loan words and phrases were provided by the native Fadija speakers who participated in this research.

Moreover, there are some borrowings words related to the government sector, examples are provided below in Table 5.

Loanwords	Arabic source	English translation
<i>hokum</i>	<i>ḥukum</i>	governing
<i>hokuma</i>	<i>ḥukuma</i>	government
<i>hokmu</i>	<i>ḥokm</i>	judgement
<i>bolis</i>	<i>bolis</i>	police
<i>mahkama</i>	<i>mahkama</i>	court
<i>gadj</i>	<i>ʔa:di</i>	a judge
<i>siḡin</i>	<i>siḡin</i>	prison

Table 5. Terms related to government

Relexification

Appel and Muysken refer to relexification as words from the majority language which replace words from minority language.⁶⁸ Relexification is one of the ways that a majority language controls a minority language and limits its use. Appel and Muysken consider relexification to be a phenomenon which goes hand in hand with the loss of lexical skills in a minority language.⁶⁹ Table 6 below illustrates some examples of vocabulary decline in Fadija Nobiin.

Native words	Loanwords	Arabic source	English translation
<i>ganir</i>	<i>moos</i>	<i>mus</i>	razor blade
<i>kattari</i>	<i>hait</i>	<i>ḥeta</i>	wall
<i>ko:</i>	<i>esid</i>	<i>ʔased</i>	lion
<i>duḡna</i>	<i>ernab</i>	<i>ʔarnab</i>	rabbit

Table 6. Nobiin words undergoing replacement.

Lexical variation reflecting borrowing from Arabic

Appel and Muysken have proposed that the following lexical borrowability scale moving from “easily borrowed” to “less easily borrowed” which is illustrated the scale in Figure 2 below:

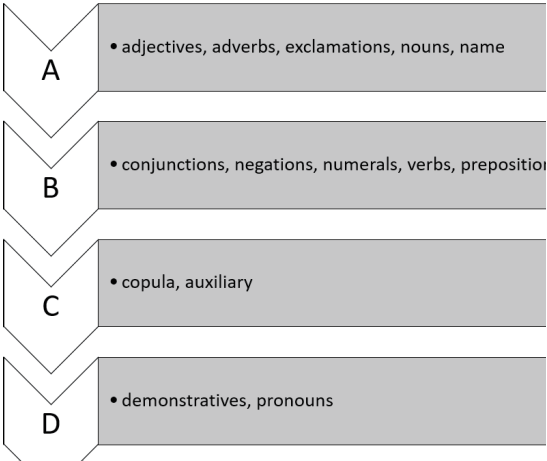
Heavy lexical borrowing from Arabic to Nubian was primarily caused by prolonged contact with non-Nubian Egyptians. Some function words have been borrowed, such as *lakin* “but” and *illa* “except.” Rouchdy argued that non-competent Fadija bilingual speakers always add this suffix *-a*, which is a predicate marker, to borrowed Arabic adjectives: *aneeda* “stubborn,” *kasalana* “lazy,” and *fadija* “empty.”⁷⁰ However, she does not provide contextualized examples to support her argument. It might be possible to add the predicate marker *-a* to predicate adjective, but it is because that such speakers apply the rule they know which is a sign of overgeneralization rather than incompetence. That being said, it is important to note that all

68 APPEL & MUYSKEN, *Language Contact and Bilingualism*, p. 42.

69 Ibid., p. 49.

70 ROUCHDY, *Nubians and the Nubian Language in Contemporary Egypt*, p. 27.

Fig. 2. Appel and Muysken's lexical borrowability scale.



adjectives have to take the suffix *-a* and that it is a syntactically conditioned marker. There are few examples to illustrate predicate adjective as well as non-predicate adjective provided below.

- 1
in kitti-i gadim-a⁷¹
DEM dress-NOM old.ADJ-PRED
“This dress is old.”
- 2
no:g gadim-la fa ɕu:r
house old.ADJ-LOC FUT go.PRS-1SG
“I will go to the old house.”
- 3
buru afri
girl beautiful
“a beautiful girl”
- 4
in buru afri-a
DEM girl beautiful-PRED
“This girl is beautiful.”

The Fadija native speakers who participated in this research point out that some borrowed Arabic words are being used alternatively with native or authentic Nobiin words. Table 7 below provides specific examples of doublets of words used in the Fadija Nobiin.

71 Glossing abbreviations used in this paper: 1 - first person; 2 - second person; 3 - third person; ACC - accusative; ADJU - adjunctive; ADV - adverb; AFF - affirmative; COND - conditional; DEF - definite; DEM - demonstrative; DET - determiner; DIR - directional; EMP - emphatic; FUT - future; GEN - genitive; IMP - imperative; INCH - inchoative; IND - indicative; LOC - locative; NEG - negation; NMLZ - nominalizer; NOM - nominative; PL - plural; PLACT - pluralactional; POSS - possessive; PRED - predicate; PRF - perfective; PRS - present; PT1 - preterite 1; PT2 - preterite 2; Q - question; SG - singular; STAT - stative.

Native Nobiin Words	Loanwords	Arabic source	English translation
Verbs			
<i>messe-en</i>	<i>sum</i>	<i>sʕo:m</i>	to fast
<i>ogro</i>	<i>azmo</i>	<i>ʕazam</i>	to invite
<i>fa nar</i>	<i>fa suri, fa zur</i>	<i>hazur</i>	will visit
<i>ajo, agjai</i>	<i>ʕuylu</i>	<i>ʕuyl</i>	to work
<i>agarʒi</i>	<i>atsu</i>	<i>ʕaʔas</i>	sneezed
Adverbs			
<i>issaka</i>	<i>dilwaget</i>	<i>dilwaget</i>	now
<i>ummel</i>	<i>abadan</i>	<i>ʔabadan</i>	never
Adjectives			
<i>kugur, ikugur</i>	<i>gasi</i>	<i>ʔasi</i>	hard, difficult
<i>meri</i>	<i>ʕedid</i>	<i>gidi:d</i>	new
<i>faar</i>	<i>gadim</i>	<i>ʔadim</i>	old
<i>u:s</i>	<i>gered</i>	<i>ʔerd</i> (lit. “monkey”)	ugly
Nouns			
<i>sigir</i>	<i>markib</i>	<i>markeb</i>	boat
<i>enga</i>	<i>sahib</i>	<i>sʕaʕhib</i>	friend, brother
<i>orod</i>	<i>waga</i>	<i>wagaʔ</i>	pain
<i>ʕiger</i>	<i>maxada</i>	<i>maxadah</i>	pillow
<i>agar</i>	<i>maka:n</i>	<i>maka:n</i>	place
<i>shuwir</i>	<i>sahan, tabag</i>	<i>sʕahan, tabaʔ</i>	plate
<i>baʕnida</i> (lit. “talking”)	<i>hekaja</i>	<i>hekajah</i>	story
<i>mu:le</i>	<i>ʕebel</i>	<i>gabal</i>	mountain

Table 7. Native and borrowed synonyms.

As is clear from the list above, it is commonplace to borrow nouns, adjectives, and adverbs among languages. To summarize, there is heavy lexical borrowing from Arabic into Nobiin and there are different types of borrowing patterns. The first pattern is need-based borrowing, such as *guter* from *ʔatr* “train” and *hokum* from *hukum* “governing.” The second type is to borrow words to indicate a different semantic meaning than the native words, such as *ebrah* from Arabic *ʔebrah* “injection needle,” leaving the native word *telli* to indicate “sewing needle,” and *shuwir* which is a native word “Nubian plate used for non-eating purposes” versus the borrowed word *sahan* is used to indicate “plate for eating.” Moreover, there are some lexemes, both native and borrowed, used to indicate the same meanings and they are used alternatively, e.g., the native word *mu:le* is used alternatively along with the borrowed one *ʕebel* from Arabic *gabal* “mountain,” and the verb “to invite” can be expressed either using the native verb *ogro* or the one borrowed *azmo* from Arabic

ṣazam. As a part of language development and loss, some native words start to disappear from the Nobiin lexicon, such as the word *ganir* was replaced by *moos* from Arabic *mus* “razor blade,” and *hait* from Arabic *heta* replaced the native word *kattari* “wall.”

Lexical borrowing in a folk song

In order to illustrate the heavy borrowing, I have analyzed a folk song by Motasem Hassan, which is very famous in both Nobiin varieties, Fadija and Mahas. The song demonstrates an example of the heavy borrowing from the Arabic language found in the Nubian *oddafirin* “lying sick.” The concept of the song is that the singer, who is on his deathbed, describes the suffering and torture that he experienced in love. He seeks salvation in love, religion, and nature. In the end, he realizes how difficult and short life is. An English translation of the song is attached in Appendix 1.

The song has two major themes: love and religion. Lexical words about emotions and love are Nubian and not borrowed, while religious words are borrowed from Arabic. Almost all the loanwords in the song either have Islamic concepts or religious connotations, with four exceptions: the preposition *badta* “after,” *bahar* “sea,” *seher* “staying up,” *samah* “forgiveness,” and *ḡebel* “mountain.” The song illustrates a pattern of borrowing: the further away from the family circle, the more likely it is to borrow from Arabic; it is more likely to use Nobiin words when discussing family and personal matters. Figure 3 represents the pattern of borrowing in the folklore song.

The nineteen Arabic loanwords in the song are all Nubianized: Nubian suffixal morphemes are added to their stems since Nobiin is a postpositional language. In other words, the loanwords in the

song are given phonological and morphological adaptations to fit the Nobiin system. The list of loanwords in the song and the meaning of the words along with their pronunciation in Egyptian Arabic is presented in Table 8 below:

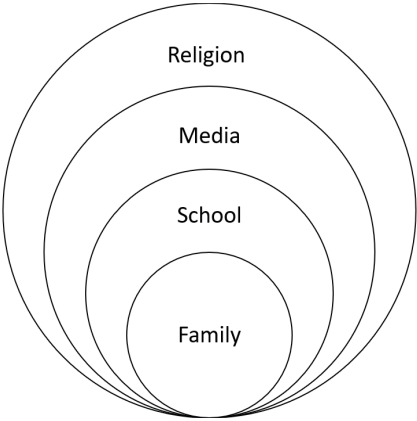


Fig. 3. Borrowing pattern in the folk song. The closer you get to the family, private, and personal area, the more likely is the presence of native Nubian words. Borrowing seems to be need-based when it comes to religion, education, and media.

Loanwords	Arabic source	English translation
<i>samah</i>	<i>sama:h</i>	forgiveness
<i>badta</i>	<i>baʕd</i>	after
<i>sabir</i>	<i>sʕabr</i>	patience
<i>helak</i>	<i>hala:k</i>	destruction, torture
<i>tu:ba</i>	<i>to:ba</i>	repentance
<i>Adem</i>	<i>A:dam</i>	Prophet Adam
<i>dunja</i>	<i>donja</i>	life
<i>hisa:b</i>	<i>hisa:b</i>	judgment
<i>aza:b</i>	<i>ʕza:b</i>	torture, punishment
<i>axra</i>	<i>axrah</i>	afterlife
<i>di:n</i>	<i>di:n</i>	religion
<i>sala:</i>	<i>sʕala:h</i>	prayer
<i>sum</i>	<i>sʕo:m</i>	fasting
<i>ʕennah</i>	<i>genna</i>	heaven
<i>ennebi</i>	<i>innabi:</i>	Prophet Muhammad
<i>umma</i>	<i>umma</i>	people, nation
<i>ʕebel</i>	<i>gabal</i>	mountain
<i>bahar</i>	<i>ba:hr</i>	sea
<i>seher</i>	<i>sahar</i>	staying up late

Table 8. Arabic loanwords present in the folk song.

Phonological analysis

The following table illustrates all the loanwords in the song reflecting their Nubian as well as their Arabic phonological features. The /h/ sounds in Nubian represent both the /h/ and the /ħ/ sound, which are found in five loanwords provided in the table below:

Nobiin	Arabic source	English translation
/samah/	/sama:h/	forgiveness
/helak/	/hala:k/	destruction
/hisa:b/	/hisa:b/	judgement
/bahar/	/ba:hr/	sea
/seher/	/sahar/	staying up late

Table 9. Nobiin representation of Arabic /h/ and /ħ/.

The /z/ sound is only found in Arabic loanwords, and there is one example of this case in the song, which is illustrated in table 10 below. It is important to note that the consonant /ð/ found in Modern Standard Arabic, which is an emphatic voiced dental fricative, is realized as /z/, which is a voiced alveolar fricative, in the Egyptian dialect. Due to Egyptian Arabic contact with the Fadija Nubian, we can see that Nubian has borrowed Egyptian dialectal sound.

Table 10. Nobiin representation of Arabic /z/.

Nobiin	Arabic source	English translation
/aza:b/	/ʕza:b/	torture

Nobiin monolingual speakers and fluent speakers replace the /x/ with /h/ sound as it is easier for them to use since the /x/ is not a native sound in Nubian, for example, *herlogo* “stay blessed” is pronounced with /h/ rather than *xerlogo*. However, those who know Arabic, either semi-bilinguals or heritage speakers of Nobiin, replace the consonant /x/ sound with either /h/ or they keep it as it is. As shown in Table 11 below, the /x/ sound also occurs only in words which are borrowed from Arabic.

Table 11. Nobiin representation of Arabic /x/.

Nobiin	Arabic source	English translation
/axra/	/axrah/	afterlife

The /s/ represents both the /s/, which is a voiceless alveolar fricative, and the /sʕ/, an emphatic voiceless alveolar fricative that does not exist in Nubian. This is illustrated in Table 12 below:

Table 12. Nobiin representation of Arabic /s/ and /sʕ/.

Nobiin	Arabic source	English translation
/samah/	/sama:h/	forgiveness
/hisa:b/	/hisa:b/	judgement
/seher/	/sahar/	staying up late
/sabir/	/sʕabr/	patience
/sallir/	/jesʕali: /	to pray
/sum/	/sʕo:m/	fasting

The Arabic /ʕ/ sound, which is a voiced pharyngeal fricative, is not preserved and its loss is compensated by vowel lengthening when it is not in the initial position. However, the /ʕ/ sound found in the initial position of the Arabic word /ʕza:b/, is lost and it is replaced by a short /a/ in Nubian as represented in the table below.

Table 13. Nobiin representation of Arabic /ʕ/.

Nobiin	Arabic source	English translation
/badta/	/baʕd/	after
/aza:b/	/ʕza:b/	torture

The /u:/ sound found in the loanword /tu:ba/ is derived from the Egyptian Arabic /to:ba/, but a phonological change made for adaptation in Nubian resulted in /tu:ba/ as shown in the table below. As we can see, the standard Arabic form /tawbaʔ/ is not borrowed, rather the Egyptian one which is due to direct Nubian contact with Egyptians.

Nobiin	Arabic source	English translation
/tu:ba/	/to:ba/	repentance

Table 14. Nobiin representation of Arabic /o:/.

As it can be seen in Table 15 below, the /d/ sound in the Arabic word /baʕd/ is replaced with /dt/ due to the sequence of /ʕ/ + /d/ which gives rise to /dt/ in Fadija Nobiin.

Nobiin	Arabic source	English translation
/badta/	/baʕd/	after

Table 15. Nobiin representation of Arabic /ʕd/.

The /ɖ/ sound which is found in Modern Standard Arabic (MSA) is represented in upper Egypt as either /g/, /d/, /ɖ/, but it is more common to produce the /ɖ/ as /g/ in Cairene Arabic. It seems that Fadija Nubians did not borrow the Arabic standard sound /ɖ/ from the Southern Egyptians which is usually realized as /ɖ/; the reason of producing /ɖ/ is not because of the close contact with the Southern speakers of Egypt, but rather to differentiate between borrowed words into the Nubian language. First, Fadija Nobiin usually use /ɖ/ to produce borrowed words with /g/ sound, which is a voiced velar stop, while the /g/ is usually used with borrowed words which has the /q/ sound, a voiceless uvular stop that in Cairene Arabic becomes /ʔ/ and in Sudanese Arabic /g/. In the song, both loanwords /ɖɛbel/ “mountain” and /ɖɛnnah/ “heaven” are found with a palatalized /ɖ/. The table below provide some examples of the realizations of both /ɖ/ and /g/ sounds.

Nobiin	Arabic source	English translation
/ɖɛnnah/	/ganna/	heaven
/ɖɛbel/	/gabal/	mountain
/siɖin/	/sigin/	prison
/ɖɛdid/	/gidi:d/	new
/gelam/	/ʔalam/	pen
/geraja/	/ʔeraja/	reading
/gadi/	/ʔa:di/	a judge
/gasi/	/ʔasi/	hard, difficult

Table 16. Nobiin representation of Arabic /g/ and /ʔ/.

There are few Arabic loanwords with no significant phonological change and they are illustrated in the table below:

Nobiin	Arabic source	English translation
/umma/	/umma/	people, nation
/dunja/	/donja/	life
/adem/	/a:dam/	Prophet Adam
/di:n/	/di:n/	religion

Table 17. Loanwords without phonological change.

There is an assimilation in the possessive structure of *Adem + in + tod + le*: “sons of Adam,” which is pronounced /dem-en to-le:/ with the /d/ sound in *tod* changing to /l/.

The accusative suffix *-ka* causes progressive assimilation with words ending with plosives. In the song, the borrowed words /hisa:b/ and /aza:b/ ending with voiced plosive /b/ undergo phonological changes /hisa:ppa/ and /aza:ppa/, i.e., devoicing and labialization due to the sequence of /b/ + /ka/, which gives rise to /pp/ in Nobiin.

Morphological analysis

It is imperative to note that in the song almost all the borrowed words have a religious nature or are attached to religious practices with the exceptions of these four borrowed words: *badta* “after,” *ǧebel* “mountain,” *bahar* “sea,” and *sahar* “staying up late,” respectively. In other words, borrowing seems to be need-based.

The Nubian marker *-a* is added to nouns ending with consonant sounds, e.g., /ǧebel-a/ and /bahar-a/. I propose hypotheses to explain that: 1) the suffix *-a* is added to mark loanwords since it is attached to many of the loanwords in the song; 2) these words were borrowed this way and hence they remain in these fixed representations regardless of their syntactic cases; and 3) the *-a* is a syntactic marker with two possibilities, either a predicate marker or an adjunctive marker. In order to test these hypotheses, some examples were provided by two native Fadija speakers to illustrate a couple of the loanwords found in the song. Based on their provided examples, the *-a* is either a syntactic predicate or adjunct marker based on its grammatical function in the sentence. The native speakers’ examples illustrating the loanwords *bahar* and *ǧebel* are provided below in different grammatical cases:

- 5a *ǧebel-li* *dawor-a*
 mountain-NOM big-PRED
 “The mountain is big.”
- 5b *ǧebel-li* *man-dow-a*
 mountain-NOM that-LOC-PRED
 “The mountain is over there.”
- 5c *ter-i-i* *ǧebel-in* *kucci-la* *aag-ǧ-innan*
 3PL-EMP-NOM mountain-GEN up-LOC sit-PLACT-PRS.3PL
 “They are up the mountain.”

*aj ɕebel-ka nal-is*⁷² 5d
 1SG mountain-ACC see-PT1.1SG
 “I have seen the mountain.”

bahar-i dawor-a 5e
 sea-NOM big-PRED
 “The sea is big.”

aj bahar-ka nal-is 5f
 1SG sea-ACC see-PT1.1SG
 “I have seen the sea.”

ter-i-i sigir-ka bahar-la kon-ɕ-innan 5g
 3PL-EMP-NOM boat-ACC sea-LOC have-PLACT-PRS.3PL
 “They have a boat in the sea.”

bahar-i man-dow-a 5h
 sea-NOM that-LOC-PRED
 “The sea is over there.”

man-do bahar-a 5i
 that-LOC sea-PRED
 “Over there is the sea.”

Mahammad-(l)i id-a 5j
 Mahammad-NOM man-PRED
 “Mohammad is a man.”

Mahammad-(l)i Mona-ga ufr-on 5k
 Mahammad-NOM Mona-ACC hit-PT1.3SG
 “Mohammad hit Mona.”

Therefore, we can exclude that the *-a* marker found in most of the borrowed nouns in the song is to mark out loanwords into the Nubian language, but conclude rather that it is an inflectional predicate syntactic marker in the nominal sentences given above.

In Old Nubian, the morphological postpositional marker for the determiner is *-l*, while the morphological marker used in modern Nobiin to mark the nominative case is *-i*. Bechhaus-Gerst lists the marker as *-(i)l*, arguing that the subjective marker (determiner) *-l* is lost in modern Nobiin. However, she does not explore using the

72 Dr. Mohamed Taha reports that *nalis* alternatively can be replaced by its modern version *nass* with same meaning and tense. He adds that *nalis* is more likely be used by fluent speakers of Nobiin.

-i as a nominative maker in modern Nobiin.⁷³ The examples above show that the -l marker is replaced in modern Nobiin by -i or -li to mark the nominative case. The Fadija native participants confirm that -li is the most common nominative marker, but that -l can be dropped to get the reduced form -i.

In some cases, in the song -a is used as an adjunctive marker to avoid having two consonants following each other. The following example from the song illustrates the use of -a to break the consonant cluster.

- 6 *aj odd-a fi-r-en*
 1SG sick-ADJU be.STAT-PRS.1SG-because
 “because I am lying sick”
- 7 *sabr-a mesk-a*
 patience-ADJU unable-COP
 “I am unable to be patient”
- 8 *sall-a sum-min-ĩ⁷⁴*
 pray-ADJU fast-NEG.PRS.3SG-REL
 “whoever is not performing prayers nor fasting”

According to Matras, there are four strategies for integrating borrowed nouns into a language: 1) treating borrowed nouns like native ones by integrating native inflectional morphemes patterns; 2) avoiding integration by keeping a simplified feature of the borrowed nouns; 3) integrating borrowed nouns while maintaining their original source language inflections; and 4) applying certain features of integration to mark out the borrowed nouns as loanwords.⁷⁵ In this part, I analyze the loanwords in the song morphologically based on Matras’s structural strategies of noun integration.⁷⁶

Integrating native inflection into borrowed nouns

As it has been mentioned earlier in the analysis, all the borrowed nouns in the song are Nubianized, i.e., native Nobiin suffixes, either phonological or morphological ones, are added to their stems. Some examples are illustrated below:

⁷³ BECHHAUS-GERST, *The (Hi)story of Nobiin*, p. 32.

⁷⁴ Dr. Mohamed Taha reports that in some Fadija villages such as Ibream, the negation particle is *mun*, but it is *min* in other regions, such as Balanah.

⁷⁵ MATRAS, *Language Contact*, p. 172.

⁷⁶ Ibid.

ennebi-in umma

Prophet-GEN nation

“The Nation of the Prophet.”

9

As the example shows, the word *ennebi* “Prophet” is borrowed with its definite article *al-*, pronounced as *en-nebi* in the Egyptian vernacular, which is the source contact language in the Nobiin case. The Nobiin inflectional genitive marker morpheme is integrated into the borrowed noun. The reason for keeping the definite article in this borrowed word might be due to the fact that the article in this example is to mark definiteness and also reference. In other words, the Prophet Muhammad (and only the Prophet Muhammad is referred to as *ennebi*).

do:ro-(lo)g dʒebel-a

above-LOC mountain-PRED

“The mountain is above.”

10

tawo-log bahar-a

under-LOC sea-PRED

“The sea is beneath.”

11

The examples above show native inflection integration to the borrowed nouns, i.e., the syntactic inflectional morpheme *-a* is attached to mark the predicate.

Integrating native inflection into borrowed verbs

There are just three borrowed verbs in the song and they are analyzed separately. As illustrated below, there are morphological markers added to the verbs with phonological adaptations to fit into the Nubian conjugation system.

samaho:-mmi aj-ga

forgive-AFF 1SG-ACC

“Do forgive me!”

12

sall-a sum-mi:n-i

pray-ADJU fast-NEG.PRS.3SG-REL

“whoever is not performing prayers nor fasting”

13

The example above represents native inflection to the borrowed verbs which belong to the same word class, i.e., they are verbs in both the source language and the target language. Example 6 presents borrowing of two consecutive verbs with the addition of the

negation morpheme to the second one. In both examples, it is not clear whether Nubians borrowed the stem verb (past tense) and added needed morphological markers afterwards, or whether the noun *sʿala:h* “prayer” is borrowed. In order to be certain, two native speakers provide some sentences to illustrate both verbs in various grammatical cases:

- 14 *aj ramadan-in messe-ga en-ir*
 1SG ramadan-GEN fast-ACC keep-PRS.1SG
 “I observe the fast of Ramadan.”
- 15 *aj messe-ga en-ir*
 1SG fast-ACC keep-PRS.1SG
 “I observe the fast.”
- 16 *messe-i barakaj-a*
 fast-NOM blessed-PRED
 “Fasting is blessed.”
- 17 *aj messe-ga f en-ir*
 1SG fast-ACC FUT keep-PRS.1SG
 “I will observe the fast.”

Based on these examples, there is a native word for *messe* “fast” which is used as a noun in all the examples above. The two native speakers state that it is more common in Fadija Nubian to use the native word *messe* rather than the borrowed word *sum* in everyday conversation. I propose that the word *sum* in the song is borrowed from the verbal noun /sʿo:m/ from Egyptian Arabic with phonological adaptation, found in the song as /sum/.

- 18 *aj faḡir-ka sall-ir*
 1SG faḡir-ACC pray-PRS.1SG
 “I pray the faḡir prayer.”
- 19 *sala-li ferd-a*
 praying-NOM mandatory-PRED
 “Praying is mandatory.”
- 20 *aj duhur-ka fa sall-ir*
 1SG duhur-ACC FUT pray.1SG-PRS
 “I will pray the duhur prayer.”

tar faḡir-ka sall-on 21
 3SG *faḡir*-ACC pray-PT1.3SG
 “He/she prayed the *faḡir* prayer.”

tar faḡir-ka sall-in 22
 3SG *faḡir*-ACC pray-PRS.3SG
 “He/she prays the *faḡir* prayer.”

tar faḡir-ka aag sall-in 23
 3SG *faḡir*-ACC CONT pray-PRS.3SG
 “He/she is praying the *faḡir* prayer.”

Werner’s glossary lists *sala:* as a noun and *sallir* as a verb noting that they are borrowed from Arabic.⁷⁷ As shown in the examples above, the borrowed word *sala:* with a single *l* function as a noun and *sall(a)* with double *ll* functions as a verb; it depends on its grammatical context.

As we can see from the song analysis shown above, all the words borrowed into Nubian got Nubianized, i.e., they were adapted phonologically and morphologically to fit into the Nobiin language system. Additionally, it was more common to borrow certain parts of speech such as adjectives, nouns, verbs, and prepositions. As per Appel and Muysken’s scale, the Fadija Nobiin use of Arabic has not gone down the scale to borrow copula, auxiliary, demonstrative, and pronouns from Arabic. That being said, there is still hope and opportunity to revive and restore Nobiin.

Revitalization of Fadija Nubian

Tsunoda states that it is generally believed that language revitalization aims to maintain or revive a language to such a state that “it is spoken by a reasonable number of people, reasonably fluently and in a reasonably intact form.”⁷⁸ The minority group’s awareness of the endangerment of their language is the first step towards saving it. But there are many strategies to revitalize a threatened or endangered language. Hinton and Hale indicate that language revitalization programs around the world use many different approaches.⁷⁹ They also add that most of the revitalization programs fall into one of five categories: school-based programs, children’s extracurricular programs, adult language programs, home-based programs, and documentation and materials development.

⁷⁷ WERNER, *Grammatik des Nobiin*, p. 373.

⁷⁸ TSUNODA, *Language Endangerment and Language Revitalization*, p. 171.

⁷⁹ HINTON & HALE, *The Green Book of Language Revitalization in Practice*, p. 4.

Home-based programs could be the best ways to save languages because they will increase the daily use of a language in a home environment. Romaine draws an important “distinction between learning a language in the artificial environment of the classroom and transmitting it into the natural environment of the home.”⁸⁰ She also adds that language movements will not be effective if the speakers rely on schools or the state to maintain their language. However, teaching the Nubian language in regional schools might be helpful as well. Numerous efforts have been exerted to revitalize the Nubian language: Nubian clubs and educational videos on YouTube. There are also some educational organizations and centers which promote teaching Nubian and raise cultural awareness both in Egypt and the United States: The Nubian Club in Cairo and the Nubian Language Society (NLS) in Washington DC. Radio and television shows could play a critical role in renewing the Nubian language if more were to be produced.

Nubian songs can also play a great role in preserving the language and culture. If more shows and programs were to be broadcast in Nubian, that could definitely help in revitalizing the language. Appel and Muysken state that broadcasting in a minority language “can boost that language just like the publishing of newspapers, books, etc. in minority languages.”⁸¹

Conclusion

This paper considered Nubian language shift, especially the lexicon of Fadija Nubian due to the long contact with non-Nubian speakers of Arabic. It is clear that Arabic is a major factor in the language shift in Nubian, especially among younger speakers, whether urban or non-urban. The process of language change and loss has started because of the building of the High Dam in Aswan, which forced Nubians to relocate. Factors that influenced Nubian language maintenance and shift include multiple ethnolinguistic factors: status factors (i.e., language, economic, and social status), demographic factors: (i.e., relocation, marriage, education, urban and non-urban speakers), and institutional and governmental factors (i.e., religion, media, and government). According to Rouchdy, the shift occurred in various domains on various levels, such as grammatical, lexical, and syntactic.⁸²

Lexical borrowing is extensive in certain semantic fields, such as religion or government. The Nubian song analyzed in this paper reflects heavy lexical borrowing of religious vocabulary, but no bor-

80 ROMAINÉ, *Preserving Endangered Languages*, p. 125.

81 APPEL & MUYSKEN, *Language Contact and Bilingualism*, p. 37.

82 ROUCHDY, *Languages in Contact*, p. 15.

rowing when referring to family and personal matters. In general, more efforts need to be exerted to raise the awareness of Nubians and non-Nubians about the decline of this endangered language. Given the position of contemporary Nubian language on Appel and Muysken's hierarchy of ease of borrowability,⁸³ it is clear that the language has not yet reached a dangerously critical level signifying imminent extinction. Nevertheless, considering how common its usage has begun borrowing from Matras's categorical striations, we can see that without the above proposed intervention, extinction will become a real possibility within the coming generations.⁸⁴

Appendix 1: Song glossing

āī ɔΔΔΔ φīPĒN CĀMΔZŌMMI āīΓΔ

aj odd-a fi-r-en samaho:-mmi

1SG sick-ADJU be.STAT-PRS.1SG-because forgive-AFF

aj-ga

1SG-ACC

"Because I am lying sick, do forgive me."

ΔīīΔ MŌΛΔFFONΔ

dija mo:l-an-ŋ-on-a

death close-INCH-PT1.3SG-PRED

"Death has become close."

āī MOYΓŌCCE BΔΔTΔ WΔΔICE ΔOΛΓIDΔΔ

aj mug-o:s-se badta wid-ise dol-gid-la

1SG leave-PERF-PT1.1SG after return-PT1.1SG love-NMLZ-LOC

"I have left (her love), but after that I returned back to it."

CΔBPΔ MECKΔ āīλ āīΔΓΔ ΔŌYMCĒ

sabr-a mesk-a aj-l aj-an-ŋa

patience-ADJU unable-PRED 1SG-LOC heart-1SG.GEN.ACC

ǧu:m-se

blame-PT1.1SG

"I am unable to be patient, so I blamed myself."

IP MINNΔ I(N) ZELΔKILΔ

ir minna i(n) helak-i-la

2SG what this torment-ADJU-LOC

"What is this torment?!"

83 APPEL & MUYSKEN, *Language Contact and Bilingualism*, p. 164.

84 MATRAS, *Language Contact*, p. 166.

ΤΟΥΒΑ Ω(Ω) ΑΪΛ ΑΝΝΙ
tu:ba wo: ajl anni
 repentance oh heart 1SG.POSS.GEN
 “Oh! Repent my heart!”

ΔΟΛΛΙΚΕCCĪN KĀPAΔE EΛCCĪN NOYBAΛA
dolli-k-es-sin kare-de el-s-sin nuba-la
 love-HAB-PT1.1SG-REL look.for-and find-PT1-REL Nuba-LOC
 “Having loved, looked for, and found in the Nuba,”

ΑΔΕΜΙΝ ΤΟ(Δ)ΛΕ ΦΑ ΚΩCΙ ΙΝ ΔΟΥΝΙΑΛΑ
Adem-in to(d)-le: fa koos-i in dunja-la
 Adam-GEN son-Q FUT satisfy.PRS.3SG.Q this life-LOC
 “will the sons of Adam (be) satisfied in this life?”

ΑΒΑΝΑ(Ι) ΔΙΛΛΙ ΖΙCΑΠΠΑ ΑΖΑΠΠΑ ΑΖΡΑ-ΓΑ
aba-na:(j) ḡill-i hisap-pa
 wonder-who remember-PRS.3SG.Q judgment-ACC
azap-pa axra-ga
 punishment-ACC afterlife-ACC
 “Who remembers the day of judgment, punishment, and the Here-after?”

ΔΙCΓΑ ΚΟΥΜΟΥΝΙ CΑΛΛΑ CΟΥΜΜΙΝΙ
dī:ḡ-ḡa ku-mu:n-i sall-a
 religion-ACC have-NEG.PRS.3SG-REL pray-ADJU
sum-mi:n-i
 fast-NEG.PRS.3SG-REL
 “Who(ever) is not practicing their religion and not performing prayers nor fasting”

ΛΑΛΑ ΝΑ(Λ)ΜΟΥΝΑ ΔΕΝΝΑΓΑ
la~la na(l)-mu:n-a ḡenna-ga
 no~no see-NEG.3SG-PRED heaven-ACC
 “will never see Heaven.”

ΚΑ66ΑΝΑ ΜΑΛΛΕ ΕΝΝΕΒΙΝ ΟΥΜΜΑ ΟΥ ΜΟΥΓΟCΣΑΛΛΟΝ ΟΥCΚΙCΑ
kaccan-a ma:lle ennebi-in umma u:
 come.IMP.3PL-PRED all Prophet-GEN nation 1PL
mug-os-a-lom us-ki-ḡa
 leave-PERF-ADJU-and bad-NMLZ-ACC
 “Nation of the Prophet, let us get together and leave the bad deed.”

ΔΟΡΡ(ΛΟ)Γ ΔΕΒΕΛΑ ΤΑΩΩΟΛΟΓ ΒΑΖΑΡΑ
do:rr-(lo)g ʕebel-a tawwo-log bahar-a
 above-LOC mountain-PRED under-LOC sea-PRED
 “The mountain is above and the sea underneath,”

ΓΟΫΦΑ ΝΑ(Λ)ΚΑΪΓΟΝ ΔΟΛΓΙΔ CΕΖΕΡΑ
guʕi-a na(l)-kaj-go:n dol-gid seher-a
 look-ADJU see-COND.1SG-and love-NMLZ stay.up-PRED
 “and if I look and see, (I find your) love is keeping me awake.”

ΟΥ ΦΑ ΔΙΡΟΥΔΔΟ ΔΨΔ ΟΥΝ ΝΙCΑΡΑ
u fa di-ru-ddo aʔɬɬ u-n nisar-a
 1PL FUT die-PRS.1PL-LOC life 1PL-GEN dream-PRED
 “As long as we will die, our life is (nothing but) a dream”

ΩΑΤΤΑΓΕΝ ΔΟΥΝΙΑ ΖΑΤΑΡΟΥΝ ΒΑΤΑΡΑ
wattage:n dunja hataru:n batar-a
 woe-GEN life unfortunately game-PRED
 “Woe life! It turned out that life is a big game.”

Appendix 2: IPA transcription of Arabic⁸⁵

<i>ʔ</i>	ء	voiceless glottal stop
<i>b</i>	ب	voiced bilabial stop
<i>t</i>	ت	voiceless alveolar stop
<i>θ</i>	ث	voiceless interdental fricative
<i>ɬ</i>	ڤ	voiced palato-alveolar affricate ; same as [j] in other systems
<i>g</i>	ج	voiced palato-alveolar fricative
<i>ħ</i>	ح	voiceless pharyngeal fricative
<i>x</i>	خ	voiceless velar fricative
<i>d</i>	د	voiced alveolar stop
<i>ð</i>	ذ	emphatic voiced interdental fricative
<i>r</i>	ر	voiced alveolar trill
<i>z</i>	ز	voiced alveolar fricative
<i>s</i>	س	voiceless alveolar fricative
<i>ʃ</i>	ش	voiceless palato-alveolar fricative
<i>s^ɛ</i>	ص	emphatic voiceless alveolar fricative
<i>d^ɛ</i>	ض	emphatic voiced alveolar stop
<i>t^ɛ</i>	ط	emphatic voiceless alveolar stop
<i>ð^ɛ</i>	ظ	emphatic voiced interdental fricative
<i>ʕ</i>	ع	voiced pharyngeal fricative

⁸⁵ This table is developed based on Shariq’s consonant phonemes of Arabic. See SHARIQ, “Arabic and English Consonants,” p. 148.

<i>ɣ</i>	غ	voiced velar fricative
<i>f</i>	ف	voiceless labiodental fricative
<i>q</i>	ق	voiceless uvular stop
<i>k</i>	ك	voiceless velar stop
<i>l</i>	ل	alveolar lateral approximant
<i>m</i>	م	voiced bilabial nasal
<i>n</i>	ن	voiced alveolar nasal
<i>h</i>	ه - هـ	voiceless glottal fricative
<i>w</i>	و	voiced labiovelar approximant
<i>j</i>	ي	voiced palatal glide; same as [y] in other systems

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Medieval Presence at the Periphery of the Nubian State of Makuria: Examples from the Wadi Abu Dom and the Jebel al-Ain

Jana Eger, Tim Karberg, and Angelika Lohwasser

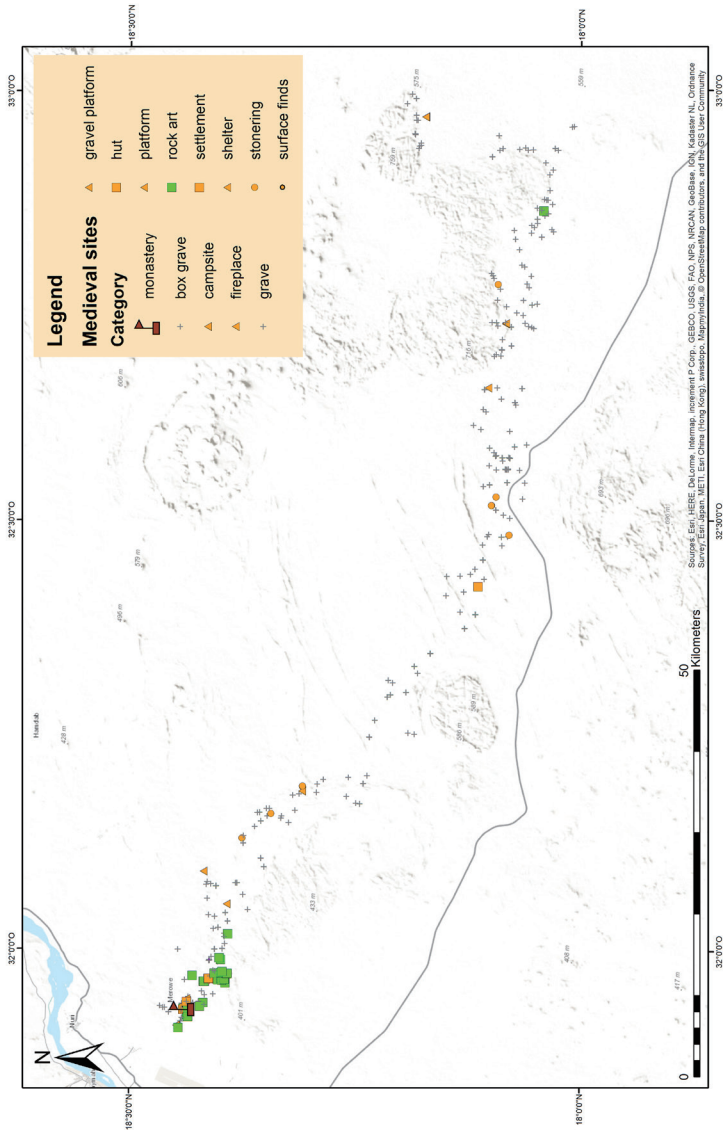
Introduction

This paper presents some medieval material from remote areas within the Bayuda and the Western Deserts in Sudan, and draws several conclusions about the presence of Christianity and the Makurian administration within them.¹ First, the general topographical setting of the different areas are described in order to define the geographical frame of the paper. The Wadi Abu Dom is an ephemeral fluviatile valley situated within the central and western Bayuda between the Sudanese provinces River Nile State and Northern State. It drains several dendritic khors in volcanic mountains of the central Bayuda – the most prominent of them named “Ras ed-Dom,” whose name refers to its role as the uppermost offspring of the (Wadi Abu) Dom. It flows at its very beginning from north to south, and later in western or northwestern direction. North of the modern town of Merowe directly opposite the Gebel Barkal, it meets the River Nile.

The project “Wadi Abu Dom Itinerary” (WADI) was inaugurated in 2009 by Angelika Lohwasser at the Free University Berlin, and in 2010 transferred to Münster University. The survey of the Wadi Abu Dom was finished in 2016. Altogether, roughly 150 km of wadi banks were surveyed – in most cases a strip of 2–4 km along the left and right side of the wadi. The survey was intensively prepared with

¹ The authors wish to express their gratitude to Artur Obłuski, Friederike Jesse, Elżbieta Kołosowska, Dieter Eigner, Henryk Paner, and all collaborators and students taking part in the field activities at the Wadi Abu Dom and the Jebel al-Ain.

Fig. 1. Medieval sites in the Wadi Abu Dom. All figures by the authors.



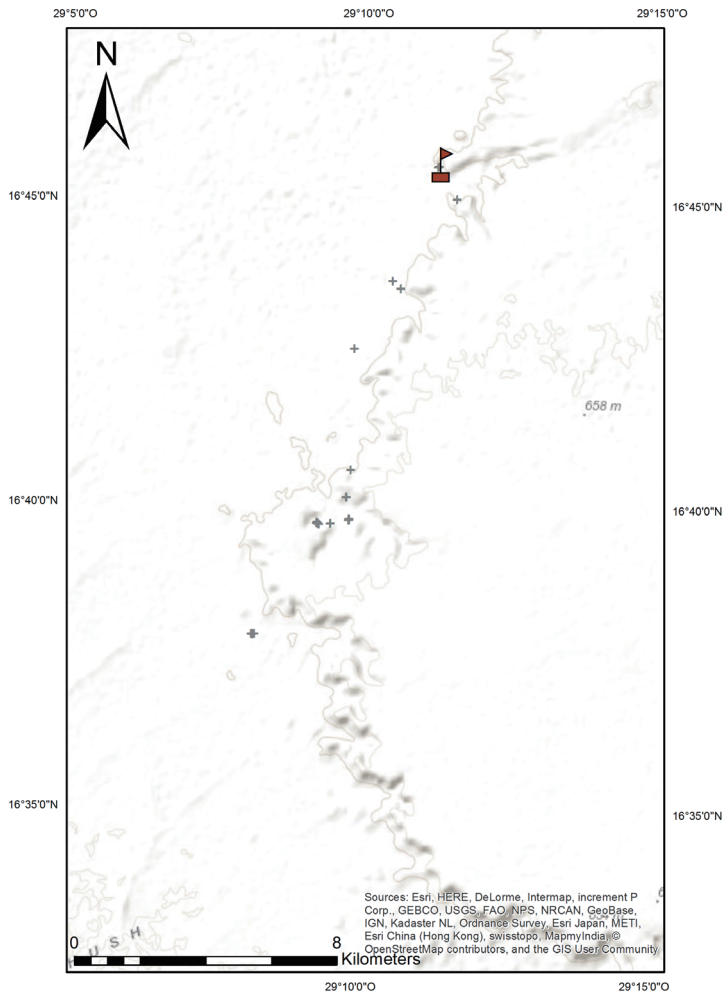


Fig. 2. Medieval sites at the Jebel al-Ain (legend: see fig. 1).

remote sensing data (satellite and UAV-based) and ground truthed in a dense survey on foot, whose working speed was significantly increased by a mobile GIS run on programmable GPS-devices.² The chronological range of the recorded archaeological data reaches from the late Paleolithic until the Funj period. Out of 13,794 documented archaeological features, 849 can be clearly dated to the medieval period (Fig. 1). No church was discovered during the survey activities (the only church within the Wadi Abu Dom is the already known monastery at Ghazali). The Christian-medieval sites of the Wadi Abu Dom consist mainly of graveyards (most of them containing more or less elaborate versions of the typical box graves), some camp and settlement structures, and surface finds of medieval pottery. Another major task of the project was the reconstruction of ancient traffic and communication patterns. At the beginning of the survey, theories about a possible function of the Wadi Abu Dom as a long-distance traffic route played an important role. During the investigations, it turned out that ancient paths and other communication infrastructure followed not linear, but network-shaped patterns adapted to short-range rather than long distance mobility strategies.³ This is true for the Meroitic and Napatan period (which was, at least at the beginning, a major focus of the project), but also for the medieval period, since some of the path remains detected in the cultural landscape were datable to this time.⁴ The other area to be described here, the Jebel al-Ain, is situated north of the Wadi Milik, roughly 240 km southwest of the town of Dabba at the Nile. The Jebel al-Ain, despite its location in some distance from the main wadi, is an ecologically favorable zone. The plateau of the jebel functions as a rain catchment area, with several small khors floating downhill and forming alluvial fans which are floating into a tributary khor system of the Wadi Milik.

At the Jebel al-Ain area, a number of archaeological sites (mostly cemeteries) were discovered by satellite imagery analysis (Fig. 2).⁵ One of these sites with complex Christian remains was exemplarily surveyed in 2011⁶ by the authors during an expedition of the University of Cologne.⁷

2 KARBERG & LOHWASSER, "The Wadi Abu Dom Itinerary (W.A.D.I.) Survey Project."

3 Ibid., pp. 102–103.

4 Ibid., p. 81.

5 EGER, *Archaeological Satellite Imagery-Based Remote Sensing in the Bayuda and the Western Sudan*.

6 EGER, "Ein mittelalterliches Kloster am Gebel al-Ain?"

7 The authors thank Frederike Jesse for the opportunity to fulfill this task during the employment of Jana Eger and Tim Karberg at the 3rd campaign of the excavation project at the Kushite fortress of Gala Abu Ahmed in the Wadi Howar.

Medieval fortifications within the Wadi Abu Dom?

Beside the monastery of Ghazali, medieval presence in the Wadi Abu Dom before the research activities of Münster University was often associated with four larger buildings within the lower Wadi Abu Dom: Umm Ruweim I and II, Quweib, and Umm Khafour. Some authors describe them as medieval fortifications.⁸ In 2011 and 2012, the architecture of these buildings was documented, including some small-scale, preliminary soundings. In 2011, research was focused on the site of Umm Ruweim I.⁹ At the beginning of the investigations, the presence of some Christian medieval graves (especially at the nearby building Umm Ruweim II) led to the assumptions that also the buildings themselves might date to the medieval period. The detailed architectural survey, nevertheless, revealed that all the building elements which could be, at the first glance, related to fortification purposes in fact lacked any military character. Additionally, some C14 dates and ceramic material recovered within the small architectural sounding from the construction stratum of the outer walls pointed to the late or post-Meroitic period, disproving the medieval dating of the building. These C14 dates, of course, are only valid for the structure of Umm Ruweim I (and, to be really precise, only for its outer walls). But there is also an indication that at least the enclosures of Umm Ruweim II and the very similar one at Umm Khafour might also date in the pre-medieval times. Some of the Christian box graves immediately outside the building turned out to be built from material taken from the outer walls of the enclosure.¹⁰ The same is true for at least one of the box grave cemeteries at Umm Khafour. Here, some breeches in the western wall of the enclosure are clearly to be seen as results of stone quarrying activities at the (therefore then unused) building walls, in order to gather building material for the graves at the northern box grave cemetery. This might lead to the assumption that at the time these box graves were constructed, the walled buildings had already lost their intentional function and had possibly even fallen to ruins.¹¹

Christian presence around the monastery of al-Ghazali

The monastery of Ghazali and its surrounding graveyards are not part of the concession area of Münster University, but excavated by a team of the Polish Centre of Mediterranean Archaeology, led by Artur Obłuski.¹² Nevertheless, it is of much importance to the whole

8 WELSBY, *The Medieval Kingdoms of Nubia*.

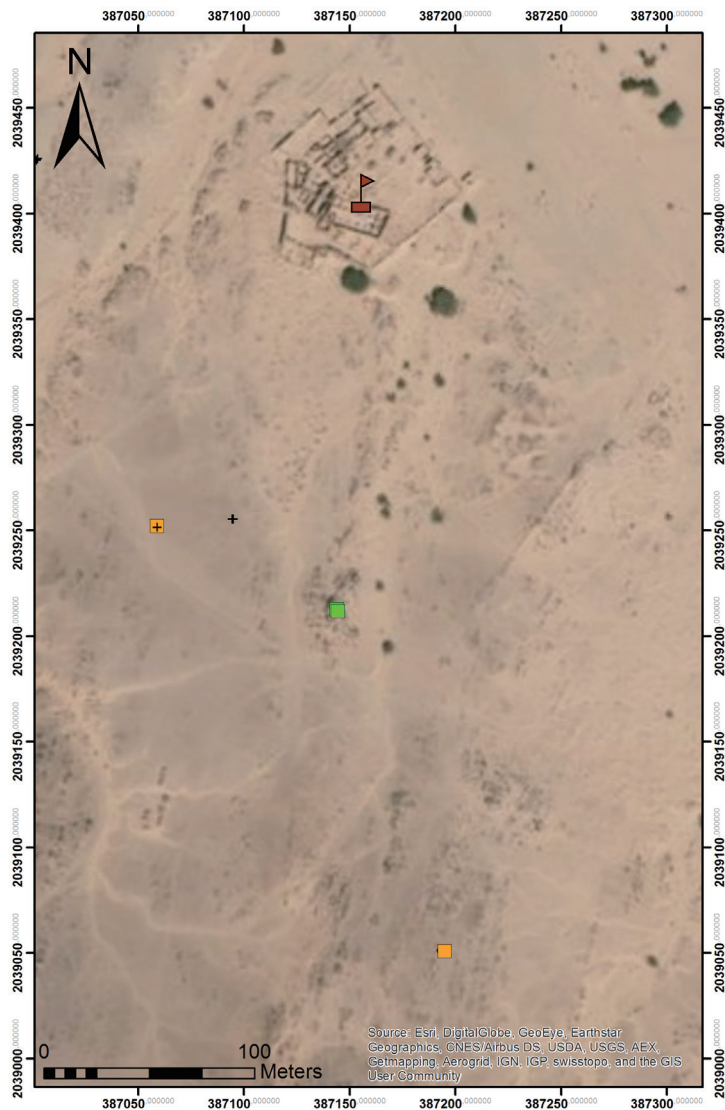
9 EIGNER & KARBERG, "Die Bauaufnahme in Umm Ruweim."

10 EIGNER & KARBERG, "Die Großbauten Umm Ruweim 2."

11 Cf. also EIGNER, "Fortified Sites?"

12 OBLUSKI, "Ghazali Site Presentation Project 2012–2014"; OBLUSKI & OCHALEA, "La redécouverte d'un monastère nubien"; OBLUSKI, et al., "The Winter Seasons of 2013 and 2014

Fig. 3. The vicinity of the monastery of Ghazali (legend, see fig. 1).



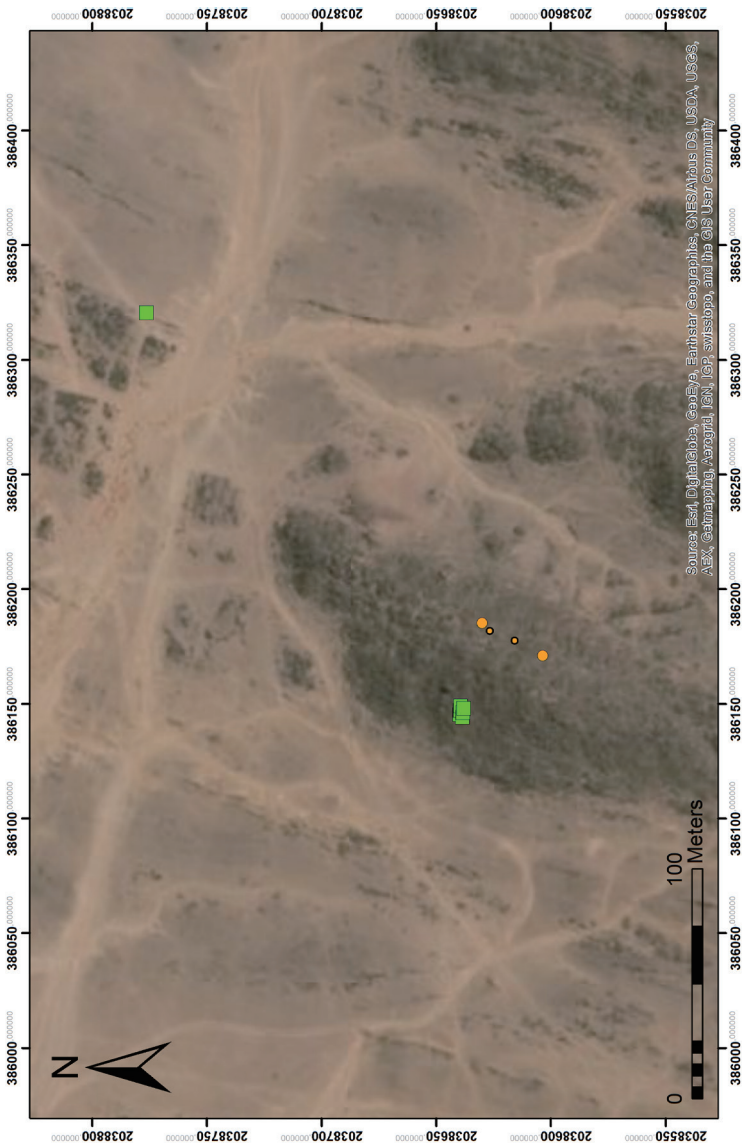


Fig. 4. The
anchoretic
hermitage
southwest of
Ghazali (legend:
see fig. 1).

lower Wadi Abu Dom during the medieval age, since it is a Christian center which influenced its direct neighborhood to a great extent (Fig. 3). However, indications that it played a role as a central place to the wider vicinity are lacking, since clearly identifiable traffic patterns connecting it to the central Bayuda were not recorded during the survey. Around the Ghazali monastery, the density of Christian sites is much higher than in any other area of the Wadi Abu Dom. Most interestingly, almost all rock art with Christian motifs, as well as Christian inscriptions, is concentrated around this Christian center. Additionally, the largest Christian medieval graveyards found within the wadi are also directly associated with the cemetery and the adjacent settlement structure.

Some of the rock inscriptions immediately surrounding the monastery show inscriptions in Greek letters,¹³ indicating that the monastery was integrated into the educational and religious tradition of the Nubian Nile valley culture, and despite its topographical position oriented to the standards of the major centers of Nubian Christianity. Therefore, it might be misleading to interpret Ghazali as a peripheral site. Nevertheless, it influenced at least Christian practices in the direct neighborhood. Some Christian rock art is concentrated along a most probably historical path cutting a bend of the Wadi and bypassing the immediate vicinity of the monastery. The target of this path was probably an area where the WADI survey team discovered an anchoretic hermitage, maybe a side branch of the monastery.

An anchoretic hermitage in the lower Wadi Abu Dom

To get back to the most western parts of the Wadi Abu Dom, we should take a closer look at some of the rock art and related archaeological features within a rocky area west of Ghazali and south of the main Wadi (Fig. 4). The site consists of some surface features around a flat plateau on the top of a rocky jebel, and another rock art panel near the pediment of the rock. The plateau bears some habitation structures, such as stone rings and medieval pottery. Immediately below this formerly inhabited plateau, there are some rock art panels, the main one showing some Christian motifs, such as crosses, one of them placed together with another object under some kind of baldachin. Parts of this rock were also used as a rock gong.¹⁴ Next to this main rock art panel, there are some inscriptions in Greek letters, mainly featuring the name of the archangel Michael.¹⁵

in the Ghazali Monastery.”

¹³ TSAKOS, “Inscriptions in Greek Script on Rock Outcrops in the Wadi Abu Dom.”

¹⁴ KARBERG, “The Rock Art Landscape of the Wadi Abu Dom.”

¹⁵ TSAKOS, “Inscriptions in Greek Script on Rock Outcrops in the Wadi Abu Dom.”

At the pediment of the ridge, there is a solitary, free-standing boulder with another rock art panel with Christian motifs. Besides a large number of crosses, it shows a three-nave church and the depiction of an armed rider. Since no other churches than the monastery of al Ghazali were found in the Wadi Abu Dom, it could be assumed that the church depictions does not show just an abstract idea of a Christian church, but a depiction of the central church of Ghazali nearby.¹⁶

Another problem is the identification of the armed rider. At the first glance, the popularity of knight-saints in the Nubian as well as in the Coptic Church might lead to the assumption that the rock picking might depict St. George, St. Merkurios, or other knight-saints. Nevertheless, the rock picture lacks a clear aureole, which in other areas, such as the fourth cataract region, forms a part of many Christian rock art pictures.¹⁷ So it could be the case that the armed rider does not show a saint, but instead a secular figure. There are examples of the Nubian king Merkurios depicted in the style of the saint with the same name, but without an aureole.¹⁸ Nevertheless, according to the simple and abstract style, no iconographical details connected with Nubian royalty within official art are visible, so other interpretations as a secular (non-royal) figure are also possible. It is noteworthy that this rock picture – whether a saint, a ruler, or any other heavily armed person connected with a social elite – is found within the immediate vicinity of the Ghazali monastery, while deeper in the Wadi Abu Dom comparable depictions are lacking.

Interpreting the whole complex of findings, the following facts are important: a) the settlement remains at the plateau on top of a ridge are clearly medieval; b) not very suitable for a regular habitation site; and c) closely connected with a large amount of religious symbols. They might lead to the conclusion that the place of the small settlement was voluntarily chosen as separated from the daily life, so following the ideals of an anchoritic lifestyle. Additionally, the (probable) depiction of the church of Ghazali, together with the fact that the settlement was, at least, located close to some paths which might have eased bringing supplies indicates some connections to the outside, in particular the monastery. Altogether, this might lead to the assumption that this assemblage of archaeological material could be interpreted as the hermitage of an anchorite.

16 KARBERG, "Rock Art from Wadi Abu Dom."

17 E.g., in Kirebkan, personal observation of the authors; cf. also BUDKA, "The Kirebkan Survey," pp. 61–62.

18 SCHOLZ, "Merkurios aus Faras."

Fig. 5. Box grave cemetery in the upper Wadi Abu Dom.

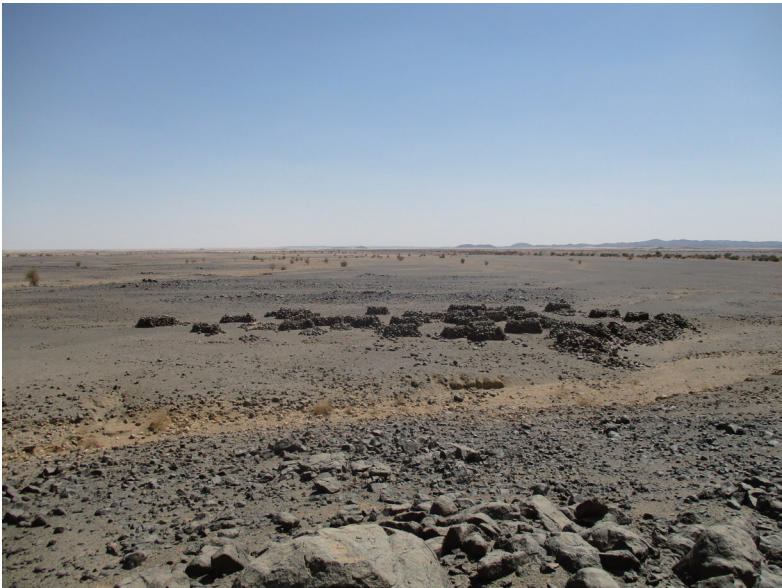


Fig. 6. Box grave near Ras ed Dom.



Medieval cemeteries of the Wadi Abu Dom

By far the largest record of Christian medieval presence in the Wadi Abu Dom consists of graves, most of them already at the surface clearly recognizable by their typical construction as box graves (Fig. 5). These graves are sometimes isolated, but in most cases agglomerated in box grave cemeteries of up to 50 graves. Some are constructed in an elaborated style, while others look quite rough, which in many cases is the result of heavy erosion continuing until recent times.

An interesting topic are box grave assemblages found together with late or post-Meroitic tumulus graveyards, which occur quite often within the middle Wadi Abu Dom. Most large-tumulus cemeteries show a – mostly relatively small – box grave compartment, often densely packed with several single graves. In other cases, box graves are erected directly close or even on top of the rim of earlier tumuli. One of the main aims of the graveyard excavations conducted in 2015 was to evaluate whether these close association of box grave and tumulus graveyards might indicate a direct evolution between these grave types, and thus no clear gaps within the historical development of the Christian medieval culture of Nubia and its late and post-Meroitic predecessors.

Especially within the upper Wadi Abu Dom, several box grave cemeteries were found that had no obvious tumulus predecessors, often with exceptionally large grave superstructures (Fig. 6). Often they were associated with habitation structures (see below). In these cases, the settlements were situated at an elevated terrain on the rocky jebel flanks, while the associated cemeteries were erected in the valley at the pediment of the jebels, widely visible for travelers coming along the wadi.

At two cemeteries with box graves as well as tumuli near Bir Merwa excavations were carried out in 2015.¹⁹ At site 5500, the WADI team excavated box graves as well as late and post-Meroitic tumuli. The tumuli were clearly datable to the time up to the very early 5th century CE.²⁰ The four excavated (out of 36) box graves date most probably to the 7th to the 9th century CE.²¹ Additionally, the bone material probed from the tumuli as well as the box graves turned out to be too fragmentary for a meaningful DNA analysis, so that neither a gradual evolution of this cemetery, nor a relationship between the two groups of individuals buried under the tumuli nor the box graves could be proved.

19 LOHWASSER, EGER & KARBERG, "Das Projekt Wadi Abu Dom Itinerary (W.A.D.I.). Kampagne 2015."

20 EGER & KOŁOSOWSKA, "From the Late Meroitic to the Makurian Period," pp. 198–219.

21 Ibid., pp. 222–226.

Fig. 7. 3D-Model of the Christian tumulus 5364-9 from the middle Wadi Abu Dom.



Nevertheless, at least an interesting detail from one of the excavated box graves came up, i.e., a small ceramic bowl placed at the head of the grave. Obviously, it was repaired already in antiquity, so the first assumption of the excavators that the bowl might have been used as a lamp is to be questioned, despite the fact that other functions cannot be attributed to it so far.²²

Another cemetery was excavated at site 5364. Here, as at site 5500, tumuli were closely associated with box graves. Unlike cemetery 5500, the box graves at 5364 were constructed without much elaboration, and thus are today quite badly eroded. Similarly to site 5500, a small ceramic vessel was found placed at the head of one of the box graves.

Interestingly, some rough stone assemblages turned out to consist of two small tumuli after their cleaning – their superstructure would have dated them most probably to the Meroitic or post-Meroitic period (Fig. 7). Surprisingly, after excavation the burials below the tumuli showed clear attributes of the Christian era: narrow grave pits oriented in east-western direction, the burial itself blocked by stone slabs, and the body of the buried individual set in dorsal position on their back. In one case, the body was wrapped in a reasonably well preserved shroud.

At first, it was assumed that these tumuli could probably represent the expected transitional phase between the post-Meroitic and the medieval era in the Bayuda. To prove this, one sample from the shroud and another from a part of wood within the burial were dated by the Poznań radiocarbon laboratory. But the results of these datings revealed that there was a timespan of roughly 300 years

22 The ceramics are under detailed investigation which will be published forthcoming.

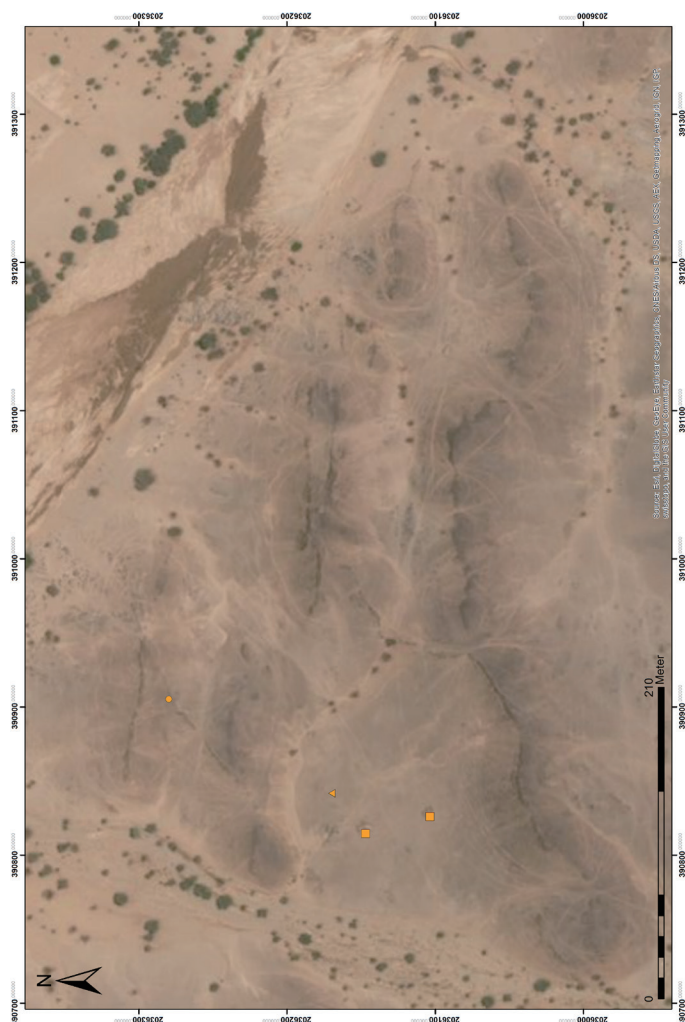


Fig. 8. Medieval settlement 469 in the lower Wadi Abu Dom.

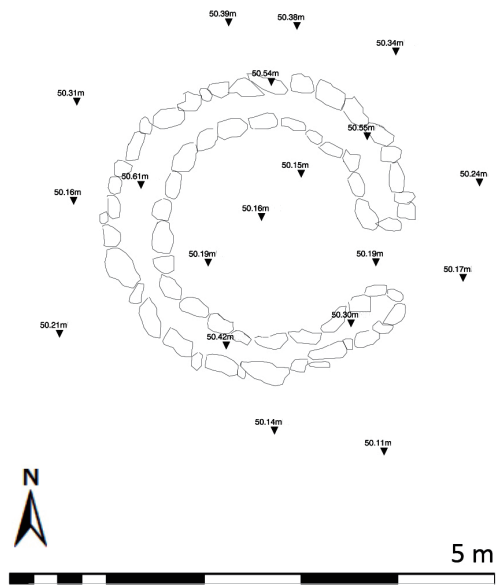
between these Christian tumuli and the end of the post-Meroitic phase, so that they definitely do not represent a transitional phase.²³

Medieval habitation structures within the Wadi Abu Dom

Another type of medieval archaeological record within the Wadi Abu Dom consists of settlement structures. They can be divided into periodic camp remains and permanent settlement sites.

²³ EGER & KOŁOSOWSKA, "From the Late Meroitic to the Makurian Period."

Fig. 9. Elaborated medieval round hut 12204-5 in the upper Wadi Abu Dom.



Both categories of archaeological material are characterized by the difficulties to date them properly. Nevertheless, at least some of them can clearly be attributed to the medieval period. Camp remains can be dated by the find material associated with them – in the case of a medieval date, mainly pottery. An example for this is site 211, which was excavated in 2016.²⁴ This at first glance unimpressive agglomeration of fire places was dated by two ceramic concentrations and the C14 dates of lenticular ash concentrations of ancient fire places to the medieval period. Most probably, these camp sites represent a mobile and pastoral part of the society, who practiced a transhumant economy besides, but also closely associated with, the horticultural oases of the main Wadi.

Permanent settlements consisted of many cases of round huts. However, at some sites, several houses were constructed in a more elaborated and durable manner. For example, settlement site 468 shows – besides the before mentioned round huts – two buildings with a rectangular ground plan (Fig. 8).²⁵ One of them has an L-shaped ground plan, a building concept also known from other medieval sites from remote areas in the Sudan, especially from the Western Desert (see below). Interestingly, this settlement is not

24 LOHWASSER, KARBERG & EGER, “Das Projekt Wadi Abu Dom Itinerary (W.A.D.I.) Kampagne 2016.”
25 LOHWASSER & KARBERG, “Das Projekt Wadi Abu Dom Itinerary (W.A.D.I.) – Kampagne 2012.”



Fig. 10. The monastery complex of Jebel al-Ain.

placed directly on the banks of the wadi, but hidden between two gneiss ridges.

In the upper Wadi Abu Dom, some other settlement structures can be, at least partly, dated to the medieval period. Site 12204 is a large habitation site of several round huts (Fig. 9).²⁶ Similar to site 468, the settlement itself was hidden between the rocks, but a cemetery of large, well-built box graves at the pediment of the jebel indicated its place already from the valley, so it cannot be assumed that

²⁶ LOHWASSER, KARBERG & EGER, "Das Projekt Wadi Abu Dom Itinerary (W.A.D.I.) Kampagne 2016."

Fig. 11. The church at Jebel al-Ain from the west.



the place should have been hidden from other humans. Maybe the locality of the settlement should have protected it from sandstorms and other meteorological phenomena.

Although the settlement was built of round huts, at least a part of them was also constructed quite elaborately. Three of the round huts show a solid technology of masonry almost resembling a double-skin wall construction filled with rubble. Within settlement 12204, concentrations of medieval and post-Meroitic pottery were found close to each other, indicating that the habitation site was used during both periods. This in some way contradicts the observations at the larger residence buildings of the lower Wadi Abu Dom.

A Christian complex at the Jebel al-Ain

In 2011, an agglomeration of Christian medieval buildings was discovered on the western flank of the Jebel al-Ain. The complex was given the temporary survey number FJE2010-1 (Fig. 10).²⁷ The structure consists of a three-naved sandstone church, another building of dry stone masonry based on an L-shaped ground plan, and several box grave and tumuli graveyards. The buildings are separated from the surrounding landscape by a wall made of dry stone masonry.

The church, with its three-nave ground plan, has an outside apsis to the west and the main entrance on the eastern side (Fig. 11). The overall measurements are 11m by 7m. According to the classification given by Adams, the church follows type 1a by the position of the

²⁷ EGER, "Ein mittelalterliches Kloster am Gebel al-Ain?"



Fig. 12. The monastery complex at Jebel al-Ain. Overview from the east.

entrance, or 1b by the number of naves, and could thus be dated in the early Christian period.²⁸ It has to be stated, anyway, that this dating is primarily based on the position of the entrance in line with the building's main axis, which in this case could be due to topographical necessities (and thus more or less coincidental), so that the dating of the building must be seen as preliminary at present. The elaborate esing and the use of sandstone blocks, nevertheless, also indicate a rather early date of the church.

Another building with an L-shaped ground plan, constructed of dry-stone masonry, is located northwest of the church (Fig. 12). Its dimensions are roughly 20m by 16m. The entrance is situated on the longer, inner side of the "L" of the ground plan, pointing to the east. Behind the entrance, there are traces of at least one room. Other than that, the original room structure remains unclear due to the ruined condition of the building and the amount of debris. Interestingly, this building is much larger than the L-shaped building at site 468 within the lower Wadi Abu Dom (which measures only 7 by 8 meters).

North of the church, there is a bucket-shaped pit lined with clay dug into the ground (possibly for storage purposes), which is similar to a storage facility which has been documented close to church Sur 22a at the Fourth Cataract.²⁹

Inside the church a broken lintel with cross-shaped and floral decoration was found. There was a graffito of a human figure and

28 ADAMS, "Architectural Evolution of the Nubian Church 500-1400 AD," pp. 103-105.

29 BILLIG, "H.U.N.E. 2007," p. 94.

geometric motives at the eastern wall of the church. Additionally, on the northern wall we found a poorly conserved inscription. Despite this poor state, the language was identified as Greek, mentioning the title of an eparch.³⁰ Scattered across the whole area large quantities of medieval ceramics comparable to the wares of the Nile valley and the Bayuda were found.

Both the fact that such an elaborated and massive sandstone church is located in a remote area like the Jebel al-Ain without any traces of a larger settlement, as well as the wall around the complex, could indicate that the structures could be identified as a monastic complex. Surrounding walls are often regarded as a typical component of Nubian monasteries, either for reasons of fortification,³¹ or (more presumably) as symbolic separation of the secular from the religious realm.³² Of course, there are also other, non-monastic churches in Nubia connected with walls (i.e., at Banganarti),³³ but at the Jebel al-Ain the function of the wall seems to be different, since an elaborated church, together with at least one domestic building directly connected with it, is separated from its direct vicinity, while no settlements or other habitation structures around it would justify the construction of such a church in a function for a congregation of a local resident community.

Medieval cemeteries along the western flank of the Jebel al-Ain

At the western flank of the Jebel al-Ain, several box grave cemeteries were found during satellite imagery analyses.³⁴ Some of them consisted only of Christian box graves, while others were obviously used over a longer period and contained large tumulus as well as box graves, resembling the large cemeteries within the middle Wadi Abu Dom.

Although none of these sites was ground-truthed so far, at least the satellite images show no traces of any settlement structures nearby. This is quite interesting, since the general topographical and ecological situation of the western Jebel al-Ain area is quite comparable to the jebels of the upper Wadi Abu Dom. In both cases, the more elevated areas of the jebels function as rain catchment areas, leading surface water down to the wadis by narrow khors which widen to alluvial fans at the pediment of the jebels. Despite that similar ecological situation, the settlement structure during the medieval period seems to be quite different in both areas.

³⁰ At present, the inscription is under more detailed investigation.

³¹ ANDERSON, "Monastic Lifestyles of the Nubian Desert," p. 76.

³² ADAMS, *Nubia*, p. 479; JEUTÉ, "Monasteries in Nubia," pp. 93–94.

³³ DRZEWIECKI, "The Medieval Fortifications at Banganarti after the 2016 Season."

³⁴ EGER, "Archaeological Satellite Imagery-Based Remote Sensing in the Bayuda and the Western Sudan."

Comparisons and Discussion

The medieval presence within the Wadi Abu Dom and the Jebel al-Ain area answers, but also raises several questions about the special circumstances of the Middle Age in remote areas of the Sudan.

The role of monasticism

The main Christian site within the Wadi Abu Dom is the well-known monastery of Ghazali. Since the time of the Prussian expedition of Karl-Richard Lepsius it was clear that monks incorporated into the elaborate, literate Christianity of the Nile valley lived here, but the concentration of several Christian-medieval sites around the monastery within the lower Wadi Abu Dom also leads to the assumption that the monastery played an important role for the Christianity within the region of the lower Wadi Abu Dom. Another fact implying that the religious life of the lower Wadi Abu Dom was significantly influenced by the monastery is the probable existence of external branches of the monastery, where anchorites lived along paths forming integral parts of local communication patterns. Nevertheless, traces related to Ghazali (similar to its immediate vicinity) are not present in faraway areas like the middle and the upper wadi, and it is rather doubtful whether the monastery influenced these remote areas directly.

At the western Jebel al-Ain, another (probably) monastic complex seems to have functioned as a main regional center of Christianity. Unlike Ghazali within the Wadi Abu Dom, the Jebel al-Ain monastery is situated in a very remote place (whereas the former is situated already within the desert, but still easily accessible from the Nile). Nevertheless, it is not clear to what extent the Jebel al-Ain monastery influenced the local Christian communities, since no large-scale ground explorations were carried out in this area so far.

Rock art and rock inscriptions

Especially surprising is the fact that rock art with Christian motifs within the Wadi Abu Dom is concentrated mostly in the direct vicinity of Ghazali. This contradicts, at least for the medieval period, the assumption that rock art in this area was dependent on a mobile lifestyle which covered larger areas. No rock art sites with Christian motifs are known around the medieval camp sites of the tributary khors of the lower Wadi Abu Dom. The (few) other Christian motifs within the rock art of the Wadi Abu Dom are concentrated within its upper part, where there are indications for sedentary settlements during the Middle Age. Interestingly, no traces of rock inscriptions were found at all within the whole Wadi Abu Dom except the direct

vicinity of Ghazali. This leads to the assumption that literacy played no important role for the specific Christianity practiced within the remote areas of the Wadi Abu Dom, or even that these communities might have been completely illiterate.

At the Jebel al-Ain, however, there is no reliable information about the distribution of rock art and rock inscriptions, since no large-scale ground survey was carried out so far. Nevertheless, at least in other parts of the area of the Wadi Milik there are traces of Christian rock inscriptions: At the Jebel Abu Negila, closer to the Nile than the Jebel al-Ain but still at a distance from the river at least comparable to the upper Wadi Abu Dom, a rock inscription in Old Nubian was discovered and documented by Peter Hogg.³⁵ Of course, this is still only a solitary find and its role remains rather unclear, but at least it demonstrates the possibility that even the remote areas of the Sudanese western desert were reached by some extent of literacy, while indications for that in the remote areas of the Wadi Abu Dom are still lacking.

Churches and liturgy

Surprisingly, except the monastery of Ghazali, no other churches have been found within the whole Wadi Abu Dom. This differs significantly from the evidence from otherwise similar regions like the Fourth Cataract area, where a large number of smaller, brick-built churches have been excavated,³⁶ and churches are a common motif within rock art.³⁷ Additionally, no traces of Christian pottery connected to ritual use were found so far within the Wadi Abu Dom outside the direct vicinity of Ghazali.³⁸ Together with the probable illiteracy of the local Christians, this lack of ritual pottery raises the question as to what extent the local Christian rites followed examples from the Nile valley, and thus how “canonical” Christianity was in these remote areas.

Within the Jebel al-Ain area and, generally, the western desert, these questions cannot be answered before large-scale archaeological explorations may have revealed the occurrence of ritual ceramics or additional written sources in wider parts of the area. The satellite imagery analyses carried out so far did not show any traces of churches besides the abovementioned monastery.

35 OCHAEA, “A King of Makuria in Kordofan.”

36 BILLIG, “H.U.N.E. 2007.”

37 KLEINITZ, “Rock Art Landscapes of the Fourth Nile Cataract,” p. 224, fig. 6.

38 This is based on the ceramics analysis carried out by Jana Helmbold-Doyé, cf. KARBERG & LOHWASSER, “The Wadi Abu Dom Itinerary Survey Project.” The ceramics from these graveyards are currently under detailed investigation, the results will be published forthcoming.

Profane Architecture

The larger profane buildings in the lower Wadi Abu Dom, sometimes addressed as medieval fortifications, turned out to be late and post-Meroitic elite residences with some ideological elements, like altar-like platforms.³⁹ Concerning the Christian box graves constructed from stone slabs taken from the walls, it is quite obvious that the buildings were not in function and perhaps already ruined in medieval times.

Despite these monumental buildings not originating from medieval times, at least some settlement structures seem to date to this period. Within the lower Wadi Abu Dom, many camp sites also date to the medieval period, and prove that, beside the oasis farmers, in this period there was also a mobile, maybe pastoral segment of the Christian society.

Also some permanent habitation sites can be dated to the medieval period. The wells of the lower Wadi Abu Dom were able to support a horticultural oasis economy which enabled the population to construct elaborated houses, at least one with an L-shaped layout. Despite the fact that the wells were situated in the wadi bed, some of these settlements were built away from the wadi and the wells, and hidden between rock ridges. But since water supply as well as horticulture was only possible in the clearly visible wadi bed, forcing the inhabitants of the village to enter the wadi frequently, camouflage cannot have been the primary reason for choosing this dwelling place.

Also in the upper Wadi Abu Dom medieval settlements are situated between rocky jebels. But in this case too it seems unlikely that the purpose of this position was to conceal the habitat, since cemeteries contemporary and most probably directly connected to the settlement were found at the pediment of the jebels, clearly visible from quite a distance.

Within the Jebel al-Ain area, no comparable permanent settlement structures are known so far. No complex and elaborated architecture was detected outside the monastic complex (while in the Wadi Abu Dom, these structures are quite clearly visible in comparable satellite images). Some ideas about the general layout of medieval profane architecture, however, are shared between both regions, since within the Jebel al-Ain monastery one building is constructed on a similar L-shaped ground plan like in the Wadi Abu Dom (even if the example from the Western desert is situated in a completely different context and much larger). Nevertheless, no traces of prominent round-hut settlements to be connected to box

39 EIGNER & KARBERG, "Die Bauaufnahme in Umm Ruweim," p. 77; EIGNER & KARBERG, "Die Großbauten Umm Ruweim 2," pp. 52–53.

grave cemeteries were found so far, despite the fact that topographical and ecological circumstances are rather comparable to the upper Wadi Abu Dom.

Cemeteries

It is still unclear whether a possible gap between the post-Meroitic and the medieval period of the Wadi Abu Dom (maybe indicated by the usage history of the monumental buildings compared to the adjacent box grave cemeteries) is also present within the graveyards, where larger late and post-Meroitic tumuli are associated with Christian box grave agglomerations. The close connection between these two grave types leads us to the assumption that these mixed cemeteries might represent a gradual transition between the post-Meroitic and the Christian period without a cultural gap. But first preliminary excavations at some of these graveyards neither proved nor disproved the idea of a gradual transitional period and a relationship between the populations buried at the different grave types.

Interestingly, some old-fashioned burial customs like tumulus-shaped grave superstructures survived in the remote area of the upper Wadi Abu Dom long into the Christian period.

Within the Jebel al-Ain area, most box grave cemeteries are connected with (earlier) tumulus graveyards, comparable to the middle Wadi Abu Dom. As already stated in the previous paragraph, agglomerations of box grave cemeteries with associated settlements are lacking. Satellite images show at some cemeteries also small numbers of rather small tumuli in the direct vicinity of box graves, but without any invasive investigations it is rather speculative whether these could be Christian tumuli comparable to cemetery 5364 within the Wadi Abu Dom.

Conclusions

To summarize our results so far, the Christian communities within the Wadi Abu Dom present themselves as partly sedentary, partly mobile, and using small-scale traffic patterns, as pointed out above.⁴⁰ Outside the Ghazali area, churches or other main religious centers are not present, so the Christian rituals of these people had to function without them. Single pre-Christian traditions remained in use over longer periods, like in other remote areas. Of course, theological questions cannot be answered by the material presented, but the fact that the Christian aspects of the cultural landscape in the immediate vicinity of Ghazali and other parts of the Wadi Abu Dom

40 Cf. KARBERG & LOHWASSER, "The Wadi Abu Dom Itinerary Survey Project," p. 82.

differ significantly from each other shows some inhomogeneity regarding the different forms of Christianity in the lower and upper parts of the wadi. The question of the existence of a gap, or rather a evolutionary transitional period between the post-Meroitic and the Christian period in the region is still open.

At the Jebel al-Ain, despite its location far away from the Nile, aspects of Christianity (like box graves, but especially a small, but elaborated church with probable monastic character) are projected far into the desert. It is still unclear to what extent the monastery influenced local Christianity, though it proves that close connections of this area with the riverine heartland of Makuria were once established (maybe closer than from remoter areas of the Wadi Abu Dom). Despite that fact, many questions about a possible role of that region as an outpost of the Nile-based Christian culture (and maybe also the Makurian state) and as a transitional frontier zone towards the contemporary cultures of Kordofan are still completely open.

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The Land of the šꜥꜣꜣꜣ (Nomads) of yḥwꜣ at Soleb

Titus Kennedy

Introduction

The temple of Amun-Ra at Soleb, constructed in Kush (Nubia) during the reign of Pharaoh Amenhotep III in the 18th Dynasty and “rediscovered” in 1813 by Burckhardt, is famous for its status as the southernmost temple and its scenes of the Heb-Sed Festival of Amenhotep III.¹ Located about 185 kilometers southwest of Wadi Halfa, the partially preserved Soleb temple of Amenhotep III on the west bank of the Nile, just south of the Third Cataract, can be difficult to access.² According to the building inscription of Amenhotep III from Thebes, the Soleb temple was named *Khaemmaat* and was dedicated to Amun-Ra and to Amenhotep III as a deity.³ A New Kingdom cemetery was nearby to the west, and subsequent rulers Akhenaten, Ay, and Tutankhamun also had modifications made to the temple. Even as early as 1829, the expedition of Major Felix which visited the site recognized that the prisoner inscriptions on visible columns were commemorating the victories of Amenhotep III, but after the centuries, Sector IV of the hypostyle hall was in ruins, toppled, and partly covered by sand.⁴ However, following the 1957–1963 excavation expedition led by Michela Schiff Giorgini, the uncovered remains were analyzed and reconstructed with the available pieces which had been discovered and identified. The columns of the hypostyle hall, decorated with bound prisoner reliefs and the names of peoples or places rendered in Egyptian hieroglyphs, are of significant geographical and historical importance. One inscribed

1 BURCKHARDT, *Travels in Nubia*, pp. 74–75; FRANCIGNY et al., *Soleb and Sedeinga*, pp. 4–13; SCHIFF GIORGINI, ROBICHON & LECLANT, *Soleb I. Ta-seti*, meaning “land of the bow,” was another ancient Egyptian designation for Nubia.

2 GPS coordinates 20°26'11.04"N, 30°20'02.36"E.

3 BREASTED, “Second Preliminary Report of the Egyptian Expedition,” p. 84; cf. HELCK, *Urkunden der 18. Dynastie*, pp. 1750–1752; cf. Stele of Amenhotep III CG 34025 recto.

4 LECLANT, *Les Fouilles de Soleb*, p. 208.

Fig. 1. The Temple of Amun-Ra at Soleb. Photo by the author.



column in particular has peaked the attention of scholars in numerous fields of archaeology, history, language, and religion, since it mentions a *ššsw* group associated with the name *i-h-w3-z*. Although this inscription and a fragmentary wall inscription were discovered during excavations and noted in the official excavation reports, no photographs were provided, no physical details of the inscription were given, no discussion of the name or possible identification was included in the reports, and there was an error in transcription of one of the hieroglyphs. Neither have other publications sufficiently photographed, analyzed, interpreted, and placed these *ššsw* of *yhw3* inscriptions from Soleb in context. Because of the lack of documentation and discussion about this inscription which has been of interest to a variety of scholars, the author led a research project and expedition to obtain high resolution photographs, document, correct, translate, discuss, and publish the findings and conclusions for the academic community to access.⁵

The inscriptions mentioning the “land of the *ššsw* of *yhw3*” are known from two New Kingdom Egyptian temples in Sudan, and reference to or discussion of have appeared in several publications.⁶ The first of these *ššsw* of *yhw3* inscriptions to be rediscovered in modern times was located in a list of 104 names on a wall at the Amara West temple, and seems to date to the early 13th century BCE.⁷ Most publications discussing the phrase refer to or use the Amara West inscription, since it was discovered first, is more widely known, and has been more thoroughly published.⁸ Among the list of 104 names were *ššsw* groups that have been linked to people and places in the Edom, Moab, Transjordan, and Canaan areas.⁹ One of the entries in the list is a toponym phrase containing the name *yhw3*.¹⁰ Specifically, the line in transliteration reads *t3 ššsw yhw3* and has been translated as “land of the nomads of *yhw3*.”¹¹ Exactly what the name *yhw3* refers to has been a matter of debate. However, this hieroglyphic phrase or toponym, and therefore the path to understanding its original context and meaning, comes not from the Amara West list, but from two

5 Photography was done with the Nikon D850 45.7 megapixel DSLR camera in both RAW and JPEG formats, resulting in 5.5k resolution photographs.

6 GIVEON, “Toponymes Ouest-Asiatiques à Soleb”; LECLANT, “Le tétragramme à l’époque d’Amenophis III”; GOEDICKE, “The Tetragram in Egyptian?”; ALING & BILLINGTON, “The Name Yahweh in Egyptian Hieroglyphic Texts”; REDFORD, *Egypt, Canaan, and Israel in Ancient Times*; ASTOUR, “Yahweh in Egyptian Topographical Lists”; AHITUV, *Canaanite Toponyms in Ancient Egyptian Documents*; ADROM & MULLER, “The Tetragrammaton in Egyptian Sources.”

7 SPENCER, *Amara West I*; FAIRMAN, “Preliminary Report on the Excavations at ‘Amarah West,” pp. 139–144.

8 Amara West was the seat of the Egyptian administration of Upper Nubia or Kush from the reign of Seti I onwards.

9 HORN, “Jericho in a Topographical List of Ramesses II,” pp. 201–203.

10 Ibid., p. 201; GIVEON, “Toponymes Ouest-Asiatiques à Soleb,” p. 244.

11 HORN, “Jericho in a Topographical List of Ramesses II,” p. 201; GIVEON, “Toponymes Ouest-Asiatiques à Soleb,” p. 244; ASTOUR, “Yahweh in Egyptian Topographical Lists,” p. 17.

Fig. 2. Bound prisoner reliefs at the Soleb temple. Photo by the author.



separate lists at Soleb – one cut into a wall and the other inscribed on a pillar, found at the famous temple dedicated to Amun-Ra and commissioned for building by Pharaoh Amenhotep III.¹² The earlier Soleb list, from which a portion of the Amara West list may have been copied, was uncovered during the Schiff Giorgini excavations at Soleb, beginning in 1957. These even earlier inscriptions from the reign of Amenhotep III also referred to the “land of the nomads of *yhwz*.” Publications in the past have generally only referred to the pillar, but in addition to the pillar relief in the hypostyle hall, a fragmentary wall list also contains a similar inscription mentioning the “land of the nomads of *yhwz*.”¹³

The pillars at Soleb

At this 18th-dynasty temple, famous for its scenes of the First Jubilee of Pharaoh Amenhotep III from the year 30 Heb-Sed Festival, and iconography of the royal ceremony depicted in the First Courtyard, pillars in the hypostyle hall and portions of a wall were decorated

¹² LECLANT, “Fouilles et travaux en Égypte et au Soudan, 1960–1961,” p. 328.

¹³ SCHIFF GIORGINI et al., *Soleb III*, p. 179–180; SCHIFF GIORGINI et al., *Soleb V*, pl. 206–207; LECLANT, *Les Fouilles de Soleb*, pp. 205–216.

with the images and names of various people supposedly conquered or subjugated by the Pharaoh.¹⁴ Of the known inscriptions from the Soleb temple, two claimed defeat or subjugation of a nomadic group associated with the name *yhwz* in the context of many other cities, lands, and peoples which were also identified in association with a geographic location or a name. The pillar inscription, preserved throughout antiquity, is still present at the archaeological site.

The pillar focused on in this study, with four named *ššsw* groups preserved, including the *ššsw* associated with the name *yhwz*, is located in Sector IV, Hypostyle Hall, and identified as Column IV N4.¹⁵ In the official excavation report, there is one black and white photo of Column IV N4, but the “*ššsw* of *yhwz*” section is not visible.¹⁶ Therefore, one of the goals of this project was to examine the column in detail and to photograph the inscription and its context. Column IV, similar to the other columns in this area, contains reliefs of four bound prisoners, each of which has a cartouche designating their group as *ššsw* nomads and then a specific designation associated with the group. These four names, transliterated from hieroglyphs, are *twr byl*, *yhwz*, *smt*, and *bt n*[...].¹⁷ Indeed, many of the phrases in the lists on the columns of the hypostyle hall read as the “land of the *ššsw* of X,” with X being a name associated with those particular *ššsw*, and often a geographical locale. However, this geographic interpretation is by no means the only option. The four names on Column IV in particular are not easily identifiable as geographic locations, and although proposals have been made to link the names to cities or regions, for four primary reasons at least three of the names are probably personal names or deity names rather than geographic names. First, it may be argued that the names *twr byl*, *smt*, *pys-pys*, and certainly *yhwz* are unknown from any other New Kingdom text or inscription besides the nearby Amara West list, which was probably partially copied from the Soleb list. Second, the names cannot be linguistically connected to any known geographic names without speculation and even modification. Third, the names themselves are not associated with a determinative of anything geographical, such as city or foreign land, and the *t3* (land) hieroglyph at the beginning of the phrases is only a general reference to the area in which those nomads live. Fourth, there are two, but probably three names identifiable with the names of deities worshipped in the Levant. Column N4 a1, *twr byl*, perhaps rendered “Tor Ba’al,” appears to be a refer-

14 BREASTED, “Second Preliminary Report of the Egyptian Expedition,” pp. 83–96; GALAN, “The Ancient Egyptian Sed-Festival and the Exemption from Corvée,” pp. 255–264; VAN SICLEN, “The Accession Date of Amenhotep III and the Jubilee,” pp. 290–300; JOHNSON, “Amenhotep III and Amarna,” p. 67.

15 SCHIFF GIORGINI et al., *Soleb III*, p. 95; SCHIFF GIORGINI et al., *Soleb IV*, fig. 76.

16 SCHIFF GIORGINI et al., *Soleb V*, pl. 221.

17 LECLANT, *Les Fouilles de Soleb*, p. 214.

Fig. 3. Cartouches of *twr hyl* and *bt ʕnt*.



ence to the West Semitic deity Ba'al Hadad, who was considered king of the gods in Ugaritic and Canaanite texts and identified with the bull (Semitic *twr*) in both iconography and texts. This name has also been given a suggested geographical link east of Egypt but in northern Canaan, with the name Terbol or Turbul, located either in the Beqa Valley of Lebanon or slightly farther north.¹⁸ There is a town named Terbol (or Turbul) nearby Jebel Turbul in the Beqa Valley east of Beirut, but connecting this geographic name with the Egyptian topographic list rather than the ancient Semitic name relating to the deity is a hypothesis which cannot be supported archaeologically.

Column N4 a2, *yhwz*, is even more unique and therefore obvious as the Semitic name and a reference to the deity Yahweh, known from the 9th century BCE Mesha Stele and many ancient Hebrew inscriptions and texts.¹⁹ "The Land of the *ššw* of Yahweh" is generally not identified with any specific geographical place, nor should it be, since there is no topographical site in the entire region with the name *yhwz* or anything similar. Column N4 a3, *smt*, is a perplex-

18 ASTOUR, "Yahweh in Egyptian Topographical Lists," pp. 20–29; GRIMAL, "Les listes de peuples dans l'Égypte du II^e millénaire av. J.-C. et la géopolitique du Proche-Orient," pp. 112–118; GRIMAL, "Civilisation pharaonique," pp. 722–727. Grimal argues that the arrangement of the columns is both geographic and political, with the columns on the edges containing the least important names and each column bearing N-S-E-W sections. While the political importance hypothesis appears plausible, the alleged compass orientations, which are different for each column, do not appear to fully match the known locations. Grimal acknowledges that N4 is generally east of Egypt and only specifies northern Canaan because of the alleged identification of *twr hyl* with the location Turbul.

19 DAHOOD, "The Moabite Stone and Northwest Semitic Philology," pp. 429–441; DEARMAN, *Studies in the Mesha Inscription and Moab*.



Fig. 4. Cartouche of *smt*. Photo by the author.

ing name with many possible options. Could this refer to Setem, a god of healing, altered through metathesis? Or a shortened form of Shemat-Khu, a goddess of the underworld? Or perhaps a lesser Semitic deity that is not currently known from ancient inscriptions? The name *smt* has been suggested as a location called Samat, a site on the Phoenician coast about 7 miles south of Batrun.²⁰ However, there is also an unexcavated site called Khirbet Deir Samat in southern Canaan between Gaza and the Dead Sea, west of Hebron.²¹ Yet, against the identification of *smt* as a geographic location, and particularly against a settlement since this is a nomad group, is that *smt* appears to be followed by either a “throwstick” (T14) or “peasant’s crook” (S39) determinative, which indicates that this particular name is a foreign tribe – perhaps named after a leader or ancestor.²²

20 ASTOUR, “Yahweh in Egyptian Topographical Lists,” pp. 20–29.

21 IAWB Survey Site #5381

22 GIVEON, “Toponymes Ouest-Asiatiques à Soleb” and GRDSELOFF, “Edom” note the similarity of *smt* to a tribal group spelled *smy* (*smt* plus *y* ending designation for a people group) mentioned in 1 Chronicles 2:55. The Gardiner hieroglyphic sign list is used in this article. The final sign, identified as T14, also appears similar to S39 “peasant’s crook” and could have an association with peasants or shepherding, although in the context T14 is a more logical interpretation. Regardless of the choice between T14 and S39, both signs indicate a foreign nomadic group rather than a geographic location.

It is plausible that the name of a deity or of a famous ancestor came to be attached to particular groups of $\$3SW$ nomads, as appears to be the association for *twr b'l* and *yhw3*. In the case of *smt*, this could have the personal name of a leader, ancestor, or possibly even a deity that became the name of the tribe, and perhaps later the name might have been attached to a geographical area and then a settlement.²³

Column N4 b1 *bt n[...]* (*bt n[t]*?) could be a geographical location, but it is also probably a reference to the Canaanite goddess Anat.²⁴ Because “house of Anat” could be a town centered around worship of Anat, a temple or shrine to Anat, or simply followers of Anat, it is difficult to determine. Several sites have been proposed as possible locations for the toponym Bet-Anat, but none to date have any convincing linguistic links or matching archaeological data.²⁵ However, since the people associated with this “house of Anat” were presumably $\$3SW$ nomads due to their inclusion on a $\$3SW$ pillar and in a $\$3SW$ section at Soleb, and no visible city or land determinative follows, a specific town is an unlikely identification. It might be significant that this “house of Anat” toponym or phrase is not present on the 13th-century-BCE Amara West list, suggesting that this particular $\$3SW$ group was no longer present in the area instead of the town having disappeared.²⁶ Rather, these $\$3SW$ may have been part of the “house of Anat,” meaning worshippers or followers of the deity. Yet, assuming that *smt* and *bt n[t]* are referring to specific geographic places, their locations suggest that the $\$3SW$ groups on this column were spread throughout the greater Canaan region, and probably also what the Egyptians referred to as Edom due to the way in which $\$3SW$ were identified in ancient Egyptian texts. Although none of the names are followed by *ntr* (Egyptian “god”) or the god or goddess determinatives, the names *yhw3* and Ba'al Hadad or *twr b'l* were not used for deities that were worshipped in Egypt during the 18th dynasty. Unlike the Semitic deities Reshef, Astarte, or Qetesh, Yahweh was not adopted by the Egyptians, and a manifestation of Seth was worshipped instead of the Semitic god Ba'al Hadad. Certainly, even in the times when the Hyksos ruled the Delta region, the Asiatics did not worship many of the major Egyptian deities, even excluding the prominent sun-god Ra, nor did the Egyptians import all of

23 E.g., the Asher tribe mentioned in Papyrus Anastasi I. E.g., Israel, which initially was the name of the eponymous ancestor, but later it became the name of a tribe, and eventually a region and nation.

24 GIVEON, “Toponymes Ouest-Asiatiques à Soleb,” pp. 244–245.

25 The proposed identifications for a town or location called Bet-Anat have primarily been associated with various Egyptian lists (Thutmose III Karnak List I: 97; Seti Karnak Lists; Seti El-Qurne List (northern sphinx): 23; Seti I Abydos list: A3; Ramesses II Karnak List: 39) and Biblical references (Joshua 15:59, 19:38; Judges 1:33, 5:6).

26 It is also possible that the Amara West list excluded *bt-n* due to space restrictions, deeming other names more important.



Fig. 5. Cartouche of "land of the nomads of *yhwz*." Photo by the author.

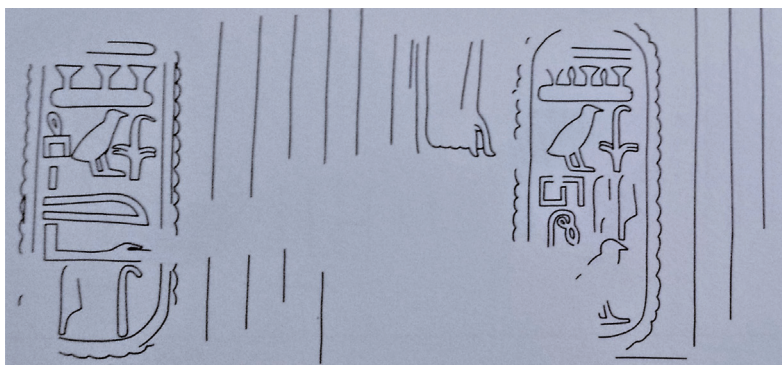
the Semitic gods and goddesses.²⁷ Although Anat was worshipped in Egypt during the New Kingdom, because of the *bt* (house of) modifier, and the association with a *ššw* group outside of Egypt, perhaps a deity determinative should not be expected. Yet, due to the damage on this section of the pillar, it is not beyond the realm of possibility that a *ntr* or goddess sign was originally present following the name. Overall, the case for references to deities and personal names rather than cities or towns on this particular pillar is compelling.

The cartouche containing the phrase "land of the *ššw* of *yhwz*" is 42 cm long by 15 cm wide, carved in relief on Column IV N4.²⁸ The

²⁷ ALLEN, "The Speos Artemidos Inscription of Hatshepsut," pp. 1–17.

²⁸ The cartouche was measured on site by the author, and the signs were carefully observed and photographed leading to the conclusion that an error had been made in previous transcriptions.

Fig. 6a. Drawings of Column IV cartouches, from SCHIFF GIORGINI et al., *Soleb V*.



bound prisoner on the column faces right, and the hieroglyphs in the cartouche are read from top to bottom and right to left. The signs included in the cartouche are as follows:

N16 *t3* (“land”)

M8 *š3* M23 *sw* G43 *w* (“nomads”)

M17 *i* O4 *h* V4 *w3* G1 *3* (“*yhw3*”)²⁹

In the excavation report and all other publications following this initial reading, the final sign is classed as G43 bird (*w*), but this was a mistake, and the sign is clearly the G1 falcon representing *aleph*.³⁰ The same final sign, G1 falcon, is also found in the Amara West list. Therefore, the correct transcription of this hieroglyphic phrase on Column IV at the Soleb temple is *t3 š3sw yhw3*. Since the word order infers that the construct is being used, the phrase translates as the “land of the nomads of *yhw3*.” This appears to be equivalent to the deity name *Yhwh* known from West Semitic texts.³¹ The bound prisoner motif also implies that these *š3sw* nomads of *yhw3* were an alleged “conquered” or “subdued” people. As discussed previously, there is no land determinative, and therefore *yhw3* is probably a personal name, not a place name, nor is there a *ntr* “god” sign or honorific transposition, indicating that *yhw3* was not a deity worshipped in Egypt. The above criteria demonstrate that the translation should be the “land of the nomads of Yahweh,” not “Yahweh in the land of the nomads,” which does not follow grammatically or in the context of the other *š3sw* groups associated with names in the Soleb inscriptions.

29 Double M17, or Z4 = y, which is rare as initial consonant except in use as equivalent of Semitic *yod* (GARDINER, *Egyptian Grammar*, pp. 481, 556).

30 SCHIFF GIORGINI et al., *Soleb III*, pp. 122–123. The mistake has continued even into the most recent writings due to lack of on-site documentation, analysis, and photography, including the 2017 publication by ADROM & MULLER, “The Tetragrammaton in Egyptian Sources,” pp. 96–97.

31 AHITUV, *Canaanite Toponyms*, p. 122.

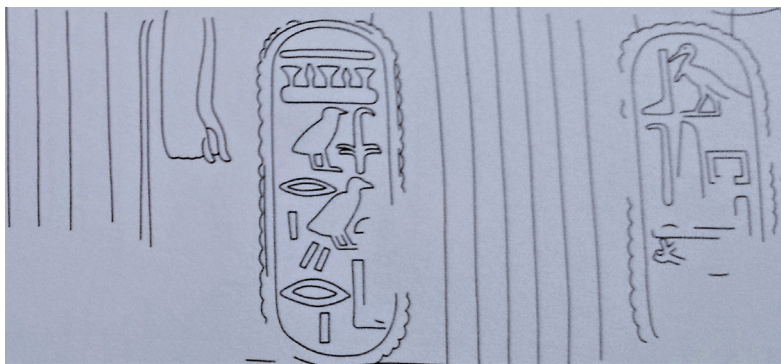


Fig. 6b. Drawings of Column IV cartouches, from SCHIFF GIORGINI et al., *Soleb V*.

Depicted on the columns of the hall in relief, the bound prisoners are rendered differently according to region or ethnic group. On the various pillars, some are depicted as Nubian, some as Canaanite, some as Syrian, and some as *ššw*. Although many columns are broken and the heads are missing from several of the bound prisoner reliefs at Soleb, including Column IV N4, the *ššw* associated with *yhw* appear to have been depicted as Semitic *ššw* according to the immediate context at Soleb and the preserved prisoner reliefs listing the same *ššw* groups on the Amara West list. Due to the geographical context of the nearby inscriptions, and the general area in which the Egyptians placed the *ššw* according to New Kingdom texts, these *yhw*-associated nomads would have roamed somewhere in the southern Levant, and in particular the area of either Sinai, Edom, Moab, Transjordan, or Canaan. For example, texts of Ramesses II, Merneptah, and Rameses III refer to *ššw* in the Edom area.³² Based upon known geography, the Egyptians seem to have regarded the *ššw* as a prominent part of the population of the areas referred to as Edom, Moab, and southern Transjordan.³³ Egyptian texts of the New Kingdom often mention nomadic people living east of Egypt, even specifying that some were tent dwellers – the *ššw* are specifically referred to as tent dwellers in Papyrus Harris I, 76: 9–10, which further suggests the mobile lifestyle of a nomad.³⁴ Beginning slightly earlier, in the Middle Bronze Age (2000–1550 BCE), documents describe the existence of “extrarurban” people, or a nomadic segment of society in Canaan and the nearby regions.³⁵ The Amarna Letters and 18th- and 19th-dynasty Egyptian texts repeatedly mention nomadic people such as *ššw*, *sutu*, and in some cases possibly ‘*apiru*,

32 Papyrus Anastasi VI, 51–57; GIVEON, *Les bédouins Shosou des documents égyptiens*, pp. 130–134.

33 ASTOUR, “Yahweh in Egyptian Topographical Lists”; REDFORD, *Egypt, Canaan, and Israel in Ancient Times*, pp. 269–273.

34 REDFORD, *Egypt, Canaan, and Israel in Ancient Times*, p. 278; GIVEON, *Les bédouins Shosou des documents égyptiens*, p. 135.

35 ROSEN, “Nomads in Archaeology,” p. 81; BROSHI & GOPHNA, “Middle Bronze Age II Palestine,” p. 74.

living in Canaan and the adjacent wilderness areas during the period in which the ššsw cartouches were inscribed at Soleb.³⁶ The term ššsw, known from Egyptian sources of the 18th Dynasty through the Third Intermediate Period, is typically interpreted as referring to a social group of nomads in the southern Levant region, and Egyptian records imply significant numbers of ššsw in this area.³⁷ It is acknowledged that archaeologically these groups are difficult to trace, as most “evidence for enclosed nomadism in the southern Levant is textual. References to groups such as [...] the ššsw, either a class designation or an ethnic attribution,” are viewed as belonging to the nomadic population east of Egypt in the Late Bronze Age, but the ancient texts clearly place the ššsw nomads of Egyptian texts in the southern Levant, including the regions of Sinai, Edom, and Moab.³⁸ Because nomads are mentioned often in texts from the period, especially in 18th- and 19th-dynasty military texts, they likely made up a noticeable portion of the regional population, and therefore the naming of several ššsw groups on the Soleb pillars represents the idea that multiple nomadic groups or tribes lived around the Levant and east of Egypt in the New Kingdom period.

Wall block

In addition to the reliefs and accompanying text on the hypostyle hall columns, fragmentary inscriptions on an interior wall of the temple, following the Egyptian practice of showcasing a list identifying conquered places and people, specify numerous ššsw nomad groups outside of Egypt. The wall had originally contained an extensive list, probably very similar to the list at the Amara West temple, but it fell into ruins and only fragments of sections were recovered during excavations. Two of the recovered wall block fragments, SB 69 and SB 79, have reliefs with bound prisoners and were part of a large list occupying a major interior wall of the temple. In the original context, the bound prisoners were facing left, and the hieroglyphs were meant to be read top to bottom then left to right, and in a different cartouche arrangement than the inscribed columns of the hypostyle hall. This wall relief was situated along the north aisle of the east portico in the 2nd court, which measured approximately 24 meters east–west by 30 meters north–south. Two ššsw groups were identi-

36 LEVY, “Pastoral Nomads and Iron Age Metal Production in Ancient Edom,” p. 157; NA’AMAN, *Canaan in the 2nd Millennium B.C.E.*, 91. While *ʾapiru* is normally viewed as a socioeconomic class term rather than an ethnic term, ššsw and sutu are best understood as referring to a nomad. Specifically, ššsw is interpreted as a general term for nomadic groups on the peripheral areas of Canaan, while sutu is the equivalent generic Akkadian term for nomad.

37 LEVY, ADAMS & MUNIZ, “Archaeology and the Shasu Nomads,” pp. 65–66; HOPKINS, “Pastoralists in Late Bronze Age Palestine,” p. 210.

38 ROSEN, “History Does Not Repeat Itself,” p. 64; e.g., BREASTED, *Ancient Records of Egypt Volume 2*, p. 211; Breasted, *Ancient Records of Egypt Volume 3*, pp. 46, 53, 144.

fied from fragmentary wall blocks from the interior of the temple found during excavations – the *š3sw* of *yhw3* and the *š3sw* of *pt ys*.³⁹ Both of these blocks were from the wall of the temple Sector III, 2nd court. On block II 79 of Soleb is the phrase *t3 š3sw pt ys*.⁴⁰ Block SB 69, Sector III, 2nd court, is a fragmentary wall block which was part of a larger relief showing subdued or conquered people and places.⁴¹ The location, R38, is in the north aisle of the east portico. The fragmentary inscription of SB 69 was found during excavations of the temple, then along with several other architectural fragments it was placed in storage off-site, but kept in Sudan rather than added to the Egyptological collection at the University of Pisa.⁴² Now it seems to be in the possession of the department of antiquities in Sudan. On block II 69 of Soleb is the same phrase *t3 š3sw yhw3*. Although this phrase is identical in word order and meaning to the relief on Column IV N4, the facing of the hieroglyphs is opposite. While a drawing was made of the inscription on SB 69, unfortunately no high-resolution photograph is known to exist.



Fig. 7. Drawings of SB 69, from SCHIFF GIORGINI et al., *Soleb V*.

Date of the inscription

The temple, dedicated to Amun-Ra and commissioned by Amenhotep III, would have been finished no later than his year 29 (c. 1385 BCE), since scenes for the 30-year Heb-Sed festival were inscribed on some of the walls and the temple had been prepared for his first Heb-Sed festival in year 30.⁴³ If the Heb-Sed festival of Amenhotep

39 Because the exact context and relative positioning of block II 79 in comparison with block SB 69 is not known, it will not be used in the argument for a specific location for the *š3sw yhw3*. The meaning of *pt ys* is also unknown and might be yet another proper name.

40 This *pt ys* had been suggested as equivalent with *pys-pys* due to correlations with the Amara West list, but the identification is based purely on list comparison and appears tenuous on linguistic grounds. LECLANT, *Les Fouilles de Soleb*, pp. 205–216.

41 SCHIFF GIORGINI et al., *Soleb III*, pp. 179–180; SCHIFF GIORGINI et al., *Soleb V*, plate 206–207.

42 Personal email communications.

43 MORKOT, “Nb-M’t-R’-United-with-Ptah,” p. 335. The high chronology of the 18th dynasty is used in this article due to recent radiocarbon studies. Astronomical and C14 data appear to place the reign of Thutmose III from c. 1504–1450 BCE, although varying chronologies are held by scholars. Amenhotep II, whose highest attested year is 26, apparently had no Heb-Sed festival, and whose mummy indicates a death in his 40s, probably reigned approximately 1450–1424 BCE, with the possibility of up to 3 more years. The reign of Thutmose IV is typically thought to be 9 years, and therefore ending about 1414 BCE, when Amenhotep III took the throne.

III was celebrated in c. 1384 BCE, it follows that the scenes on the temple would have been commissioned before this occurred. However, an archaeological analysis of the Soleb site suggests that this temple to Amun-Ra was not constructed immediately prior to the 30-year celebration of Amenhotep III, but probably at least partially built years prior to this, with mention of year 26 on the temple decoration and the pillars relating to the year 5 Kush campaign implying that it was constructed earlier in his reign.⁴⁴ Since the only known military campaign of Amenhotep III was a year 5 suppression of a rebellion in Kush, which is recorded on three known stelae from Sai Island and near Aswan and reports that all the chiefs of Kush were trampled, the claims of the conquest of many of these places and peoples east of Egypt were probably propaganda and reflect Egyptian actions or influence from earlier in the 18th dynasty.⁴⁵ However, the inscriptions do reflect knowledge of these people and places during the time of Amenhotep III. Therefore, a logical time-frame for the carving of the subjugated lands and peoples recorded at the Soleb temple, which include those in Kush, would be after this campaign of year 5, placing the date of the conquest lists from about 1409–1385 BCE.⁴⁶ The earlier range, closer to the campaign, is more probable because the lists function as a commemorative monument for the subjugation of Kush, and this would also allow ample time to construct and decorate the temple before the Heb-Sed festival of c. 1384 BCE. Alternatively, the other groups and locations outside of Nubia could have been known and considered under the control of the pharaoh around that period early in his reign, but nothing was inscribed until soon before the Heb-Sed festival. Regardless, the inscriptions claiming conquest must have been carved no later than c. 1384 BCE while reflecting a slightly earlier time.

Significance

Although it has been claimed that *yhw* occurs as a place name in an earlier Egyptian text from the 11th dynasty, this assertion is obviously incorrect when critically analyzed.⁴⁷ The word in question, claimed to be *yhw* by Giveon, Gardiner transliterated as *ihuii*, and identified it as a place name. The spelling of *ihuii* in the 11th-dynasty text is nowhere near equivalent to the Soleb or Amara West inscriptions, nor is it equivalent to Semitic Yahweh. Rather, it was spelled M17,

44 SCHIFF GIORGINI et al., *Soleb III*, p. 40; cf. also *Soleb IV* and *Soleb V*. For the view that the temple was built just in time for year 30, cf. DORMAN, "The Temple of Soleb: A Final Word on the Coregency."

45 HELCK, *Urkunden der 18. Dynastie*, pp. 1665–1666.

46 VAN SICLEN, "The Accession Date of Amenhotep III and the Jubilee," pp. 290–291.

47 GIVEON, "Toponymes Ouest-Asiatiques à Soleb," p. 244.

A2, O4, G43, M17, G43 and the determinative for foreign land N25.⁴⁸ Conversely, it has also been suggested that the earliest inscription in which the name *yhwz* appears is from a Moabite text called the Mesha Stele in the 9th century BCE. This may be true if referring to alphabetic inscriptions. However, both Column IV N4 a2 and Block 69 from the Soleb temple contain, in Egyptian hieroglyphs, the earliest reference to the name *yhwz* around 1400 BCE. The uniqueness of this name, its association with a nomadic group east of Egypt, and the contextual and linguistic implications that the name refers to a deity rather than a specific geographic location, suggests that this is an Egyptian rendering of the deity Yahweh, known from other ancient texts as the monotheistic god worshipped by the ancient Israelites.⁴⁹ Since the only ancient people known to have worshipped a deity named *yhwz* (Yahweh) in ancient times were the Hebrews or Israelites, it also logically follows that these particular *šzsw* nomads associated with *yhwz* could be identified with the early Israelites before they became a sedentary population in Canaan, and that the Egyptians had familiarity with this group and this deity during the 18th dynasty and the end of the 15th century BCE.

48 GARDINER, "The Tomb of a Much-Travelled Theban Official," p. 36 and pl. ix.

49 REDFORD, *Egypt, Canaan, and Israel in Ancient Times*, pp. 269–273; АННТУВ, *Canaanite Toponyms*, pp. 121–122.

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